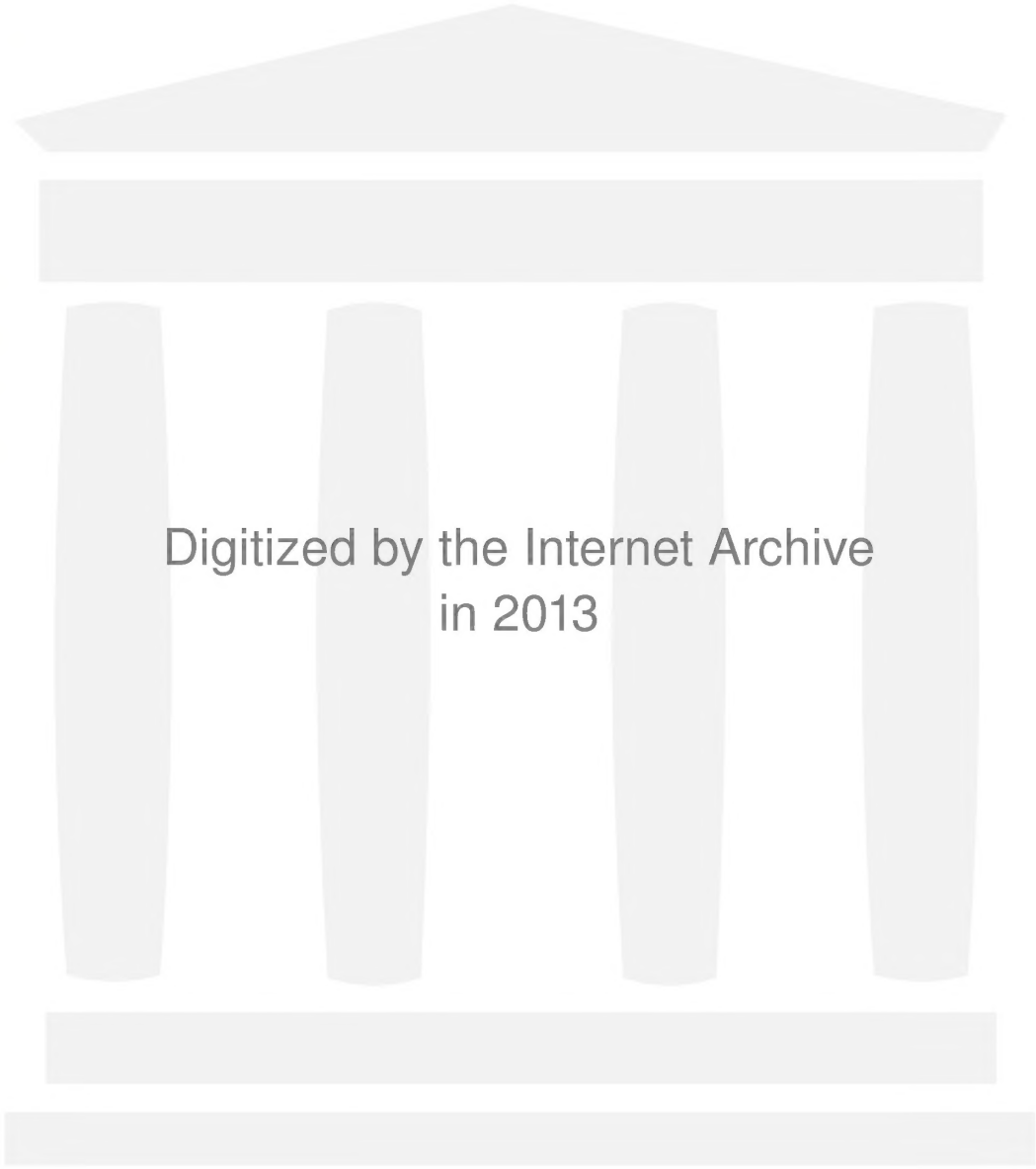
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Cover: Detail of a photograph by Sam Abell, from Stay This Moment: The Photographs of Sam Abell, *published by the Professional Photography Division of Eastman Kodak Company and Thomasson-Grant, Inc.*

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Printed in the U.S. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York. In Canada, second-class postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario. POSTMASTER: Send all address changes to *Harper's Magazine*, Post Office Box 1937, Marion, OH 43305. ISSN0017-789X. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please provide both address from last issue and new address. Allow six weeks advance notice. SUBSCRIPTIONS: $18 one year. Canada and U.S. possessions, add $2; other foreign, add $20 per year. Send orders to *Harper's Magazine*, P.O. Box 1937, Marion, OH 43305. SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS: Write *Harper's Magazine*, P.O. Box 1937, Marion, OH 43305, or call (800) 347-6969; Canada (614) 382-3322, M-F, 8 A.M.–4:30 P.M., Eastern time. All requests for PERMISSIONS and REPRINTS must be made in writing to *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. *Harper's Magazine* will not consider or return unsolicited nonfiction manuscripts that have not been preceded by a written query. *Harper's* will consider unsolicited fiction. Unsolicited poetry will not be considered or returned. No queries or manuscripts will be considered unless they are accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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LETTERS

Richard Rodriguez's Stereotypes

Richard Rodriguez's October cover story, "Late Victorians: San Francisco, AIDS, and the Homosexual Stereotype," is, in reality, one long verbal sleight of hand. We get no fresh view of San Francisco, no news of AIDS, no insight into stereotypical homosexual behavior. What we get, instead, is a distorted view of homosexuality employed toward mean ends—ridicule, intolerance, bigotry, hatred. That these stereotypes are purveyed by a man who is himself homosexual doesn't make them more palatable or true.

The canons of intellectual discourse dictate that we take what we say to one another as honest attempts at dialogue and analysis. This is an especially difficult task in this instance because so much of what Rodriguez says is sheer bull. For example:

"The age-old description of homosexuality," he tells us, "is of a sin against nature." Rodriguez neglects to tell us that this "age-old description" is only as old as the establishment of Christianity. Older cultures (Greek, Persian) and other cultures (Melanesian, Native American) would neither recognize the description nor understand the concept of sin upon which it is founded.

"Barren as Shakers," Rodriguez goes on, "homosexuals have made a covenant against nature. Homosexual survival lay in artifice, in plumage, in lampshades . . ." Nonsense. What we are against is not nature but society's narrow view of who and what we are. Moreover, homosexuals are not barren; we are neither sterile nor childless. Many of us *are* fathers and mothers, and although some of us may not choose to do so, we *are* capable of having children. The argument that homosexuals can't be parents is as simpleminded as the argument that homosexuals are destructive to family values. Yet we all belong to families of one kind or another, families we cherish and wish to maintain. We don't want to destroy these families; we simply want them to make room for us, for our needs and desires. And really, Mr. Rodriguez, "plumage" and "lampshades"? Do you mean by this that homosexuals are governed only by questions of style? We are doctors and lawyers, baseball umpires and football players, garage mechanics and government employees; we are interested in the texture and substance of our lives; we have little or no interest in "plumage" or "lampshades" or the rule of style.

"Once upon a time," writes Rodriguez, "the homosexual appropriated to himself a mystical province, that of taste. Taste . . . became the homosexual's licentiate to challenge the rule of nature." Twaddle. The history of man is an enduring record of his challenge to the rule of nature. In many ways,

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced; volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

challenge nature—to defy it—is an's nature. The challenge, there re, is not exclusive to homosexuals. leither is taste the exclusive prov ice of gay men.

Shockingly, Rodriguez moves from entrification (an attempt, he writes, "drape the architecture of sodomy ith art") to AIDS ("men who sought ie aesthetic of existence were re-alled to nature") as though one were ie natural extension of the other. resumably homosexuality is intrinsic each. First of all, homosexuality oesn't cause AIDS; a virus does. Nor oes homosexuality per se spread the isease; certain types of behavior do, ehavior, moreover, that is not prac-iced solely by homosexuals. Second-y, gentrification is an economic henomenon, not a homosexual one. Gentrification is an outgrowth of niddle-class propriety, another way f keeping up appearances. Respect-bility is a middle-class virtue, not a omosexual vice. Finally, there is eally only one group that can be de-ined as zealously seeking the aesthet-ic ordering of existence—artists.

Rodriguez's memoir is one knot of intellectual gibberish after another; his pen is driven by self-pity and Catholic guilt. There is also a great deal of spite and meanspiritedness in his essay that needs to be called to account. Those of us who have cared for one dying friend after another do not deserve to be labeled sissies. Those of us who have stared death in the face, not out of desire but out of necessity, do not deserve Rodriguez's abject ridicule.

Dana Gorbea-l com
Gay & Lesbian Alliance
Against Defamation
Los Angeles

"If I had the power to do so, I would wish homosexuality off the face of this earth." So wrote Joseph Epstein in the September 1970 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, expressing common heterosexual panic in response to the newly emergent lesbian and gay liberation movement. "One can tolerate homosexuality," he wrote, "as small enough price to pay for someone else's pain, but accepting it, really accepting it as another thing altogether."

It is not at all inconsistent, if it is even predictable, that the editors of *Harper's* would now publish "Late Victorians: San Francisco, AIDS, and the Homosexual Stereotype." The writer, Richard Rodriguez, hardly challenges that stereotype; instead, he raises it once again to the status of an archetype, playing variations on the old themes of homosexual sterility, narcissism, and marginality. Rodriguez is a court jester wearing a tragic mask, claiming AIDS is the means by which sexual outlaws are "recalled to nature." The whole performance is stylish in a manner that challenges none of the prejudices against homosexuality—and, indeed, reduces social and political conflicts to questions of interior decoration.

Despite all ironic dissembling, Rodriguez plainly has Roman Catholic hang-ups, and he opens and ends with references to St. Augustine.

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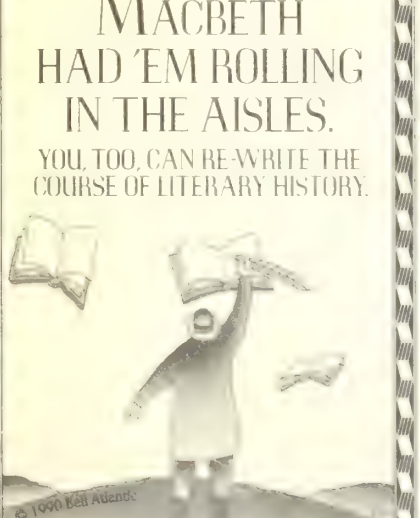
RIP VAN WINKLE HAD INSOMNIA.

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Again, that's apt. St. Augustine wrote, "We are born between piss and shit," and took personal offense at that fact, the poor dear. I'm afraid the church fathers live on in the heart of hearts of many worldlier folks today, anxious about both nature and "crimes against nature." Thus Rodriguez ("a firm believer in Original Sin," as he confesses) and others assume there is some cosmic balancing act at work in the AIDS epidemic. This is tedious, as though sodomy were more unnatural than neurosurgery, party politics, or golf. By this logic, monogamous lesbians are God's chosen people, since they are statistically less likely to contract AIDS than heterosexuals, bisexuals, and gay men.

Recalled by disease and death to nature, gays at last learn to love and care for one another. That's the moral of Rodriguez's story, and it does no justice to our real history as lovers, friends, and fighters. Rodriguez ends by distancing himself as a "barren skeptic"—a brilliant tactical self-presentation. He remains the dandyish observer, a gay guide to the ghetto without being pushy about it—self-deprecatory, serviceable, and tame.

"Why," asks Rodriguez, "have so many homosexuals retired into the small effect, the ineffectual career, the stereotype, the card shop, the florist?" The truth is that many did not retire to these niches but were driven to them in a world in which both women and "effeminate" men weren't supposed to hold real power in whatever profession they chose. Dandyism does have subversive force when it challenges the more smug and stupid kinds of masculinity, a point Rodriguez might have made had he himself not retired into the small effect and the homosexual stereotype.

Funereal at the last, Rodriguez easily gives the impression of a community dying away. That may comfort many readers of *Harper's*, but the lesbian and gay movement has been reborn, livelier and more militant than ever. The phenomenal growth of ACT UP and Queer Nation groups coast to coast is only one proof. Lesbian and gay activists are now at the forefront of movements to secure national health care and domestic partnership legislation. Our first rule: Go rude and go public. Nothing else works as well, and we intend to make both the right friends and the right enemies. San Francisco is a microcosm of these forces and changes.

Rodriguez may choose to ignore this movement and may even claim he is apolitical, a true court jester. Two decades ago in *Harper's*, Epstein put on the crown and proclaimed from his throne that gay people were "condemned to a state of permanent niggerdom." Epstein and Rodriguez truly belong in the same court, and if Epstein lacked taste in the past, Rodriguez has been hired to supply it at present. Elsewhere, some of us "niggers" are changing the balance of power, and *that* seems to be the news unfit to print in the pages of *Harper's Magazine*.

Scott Tucker
San Francisco

As a person deeply concerned with what it means to be gay, I was pleased to see Richard Rodriguez's piece. I follow the gay political climate closely and feel compelled to write to make sure at least one positive voice is heard in praise of his memoir. The author's opinions, views, and sheer poetry fly in the face of politically correct ideology on both the East and West Coasts. The piece reflects a real individual in the midst of the personal and public storm of AIDS. Whether I agree with him or not—and I assure you there is much truth in what he says, upon reflection—I stand in awe of his calm assuredness in committing it to paper.

John-Michael Albert
Houston

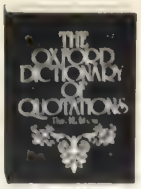
Ah, to be gay and in one's frail seventies. Richard Rodriguez recoils from a "powdered old pouf" who sports "iodine-colored hair" and "porcelain" fingers, as from an "old monkey," which "certainly" Rodriguez fears becoming. Though he gives this "wizened butterfly" a "most beatific dignity" in church, does his acid etching betray an ill-considered ageism? Whatever my own sexual stripe, I for one, in my healthy but tilting early fif-

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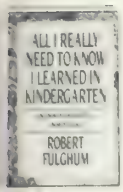


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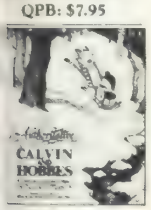
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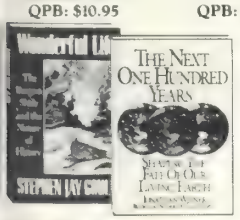
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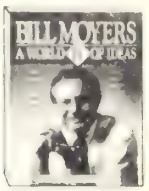
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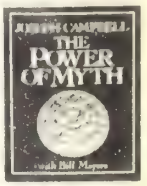
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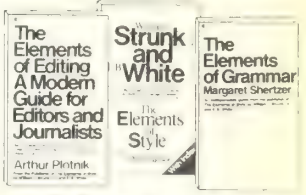
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ties, would be most grateful to be alive and responding in my own seventies. Life is precarious in the bashed and plague-riddled gay community today. Life is precarious in the human community. Amid continuing attenuations on all sides, praise life.

Brian K. Beck
Whitewater, Wis.

Selling Off the Body

Your October forum, "Sacred or for Sale?" in which the participants discussed the concept of the sale of body parts, ignored a question more fundamental than the discussion of donating and selling organs, cells, etc. Where is it written that man should attempt through science to be immortal? The indomitable law of nature is a beginning and an end—the alpha and omega. But given that man will continue to pursue immortality, the real issue, artfully dodged by the entire group, is: Who will be granted eternal life, assuming it becomes technologically feasible?

The answer is that those who have money and power will prevail. Instead of material wealth, eternal life will become the great prize. The state lottery systems of the brave new world will offer, instead of untold millions, replacement body parts for the next hundred years. What else will happen? World leaders will decide that it is their inherent right of position to go to the head of the organ list. The Arab sheikhs will have the wealth of their nations at their disposal. Democracies will not be immune, either. Congress and the president have amply demonstrated their willingness to work together when it benefits both. Outside politics, we can look forward to the Ivan Boeskys, Charles Keatings, John Gottis, and other such luminaries living for 150 to 200 years. So too with the pope, the Dalai Lama, and other holy men; and the doctors who perform these wondrous feats, and the corporate heads who control the organ distribution.

A new ever-living aristocracy will arise, set in their ways and willing to stifle those who challenge the way they think. Just as a great petrified forest was once a living, breathing entity, the thought processes of those immortals in power will be etched as if in stone.

Why did the panel avoid the real question? Perhaps, being intellectuals, they are by nature contemplative of the great things they could do and learn if only they had more time. They, too, desire immortality, even if their reasons are altruistic. Like those who built the Tower of Babel, we are seeking to be on a par with God. Triumphing over death is synonymous with rivaling God. A far more interesting discussion would center on the morality of denying death and its impact on humanity.

Vincent Nauheimer
Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y.

Although the sale of kidneys does raise difficult ethical questions, the refusal by California's Supreme Court to find property rights for John Moore in the cell line developed from his spleen is hardly troubling. Moore was happy to be rid of his cancerous spleen. His complaints are like those of a man who hires someone to haul away the clutter in his basement and then demands compensation after the worker discovers a valuable antique amid the rubbish.

As for whether UCLA's 1984 patent on the cell line developed from Moore's cells was improper, the distinction between an organ and a cell line is precisely the distinction between personal property and intellectual property—and only the latter is the subject of patent protection. An organ benefits only one user at a time. A self-replicating cell line can be enjoyed by anyone with a cell-culture dish and an incubator. Even Moore has lost nothing by this arrangement. Had he chosen to keep his spleen, it would have instantly replaced the few cells that doctors removed from it. But the possibility of patent rights motivated the enterprising scientists at UCLA to develop a line that now benefits all humanity.

John Stoella
Brooklyn, N.Y.

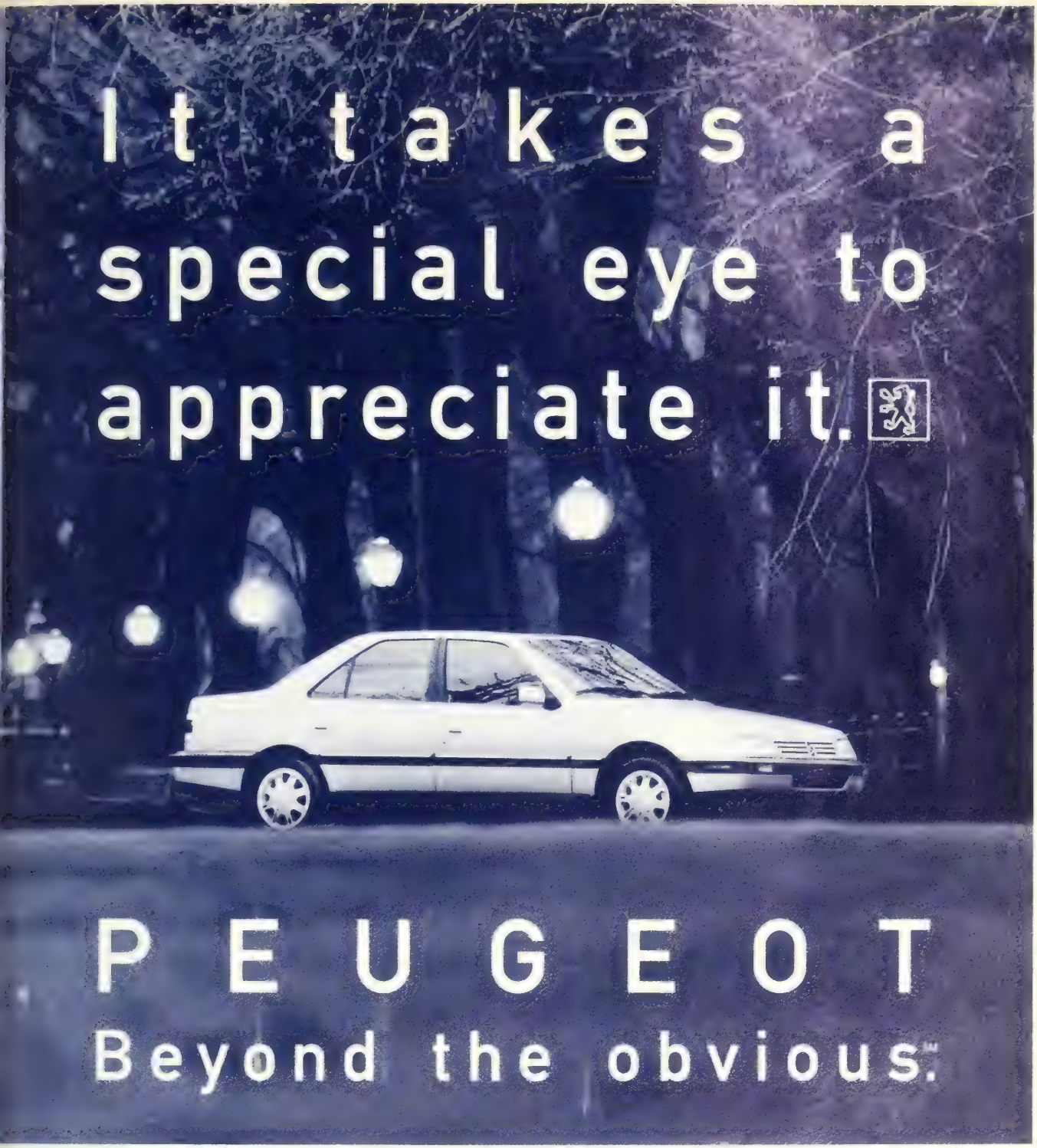
Forum participants William May and Andrew Kimbrell, and the other high-minded proponents of the sacredness of the human body, would be a lot more credible if they were willing to take the position that *nobody* should profit from the transfer of human body parts or products.

But, in fact, the blood that I donate three or four times a year ends up costing some patient or his insurance carrier anywhere from $50 to $500 a pint. The teenage mother who is forbidden by law to sell her healthy baby generally signs it over to an adoption agency. The agency social worker who handles the case usually makes a salary many times what the teenager could ever hope for. The infertile couple who end up with the baby pay a figure for it that is roughly equivalent to the social worker's salary. And the attorney who handles the adoption probably makes a high multiple of the social worker's salary. The same process goes on, at even more inflated figures, for organ transplants. As long as health is a commodity, so is the human body.

Why should the person most intimately connected with this highly valuable material—the only person who takes any physical or emotional risks in providing it—be the only one *not* allowed to make money from it? Why is blood, an embryo, or an organ "sacred" and therefore "priceless" when it leaves the "donor's" body, and a high-priced commodity by the time it finds its way into someone else's? If *anybody* is to be permitted to make money from the products or components of the human body, it should be the owner of that body. That "donors" are usually people in no position to bargain for that kind of advantage—being either dead, unable to handle a problem pregnancy, or closely related to the desperate would-be recipient—is no coincidence. Your forum participants all appear to agree—accurately—that the only choice the "donor" has is between the extremely bad bargaining position of any poor person trying to sell a commodity for cash in a hurry and no legally viable bargaining position at all. This, truly, is capitalism at its nastiest.

Marian Henriquez Neudel
Chicago

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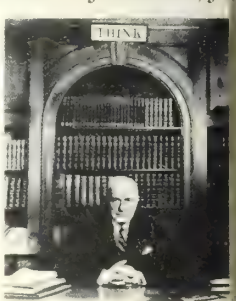
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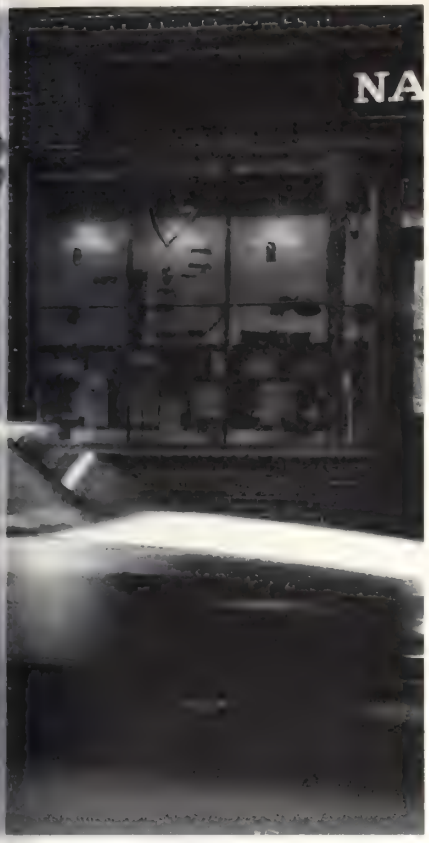
"But while I always tried to live up to his expectations, he was never satisfied, because no son can ever totally please his father. And when he criticized me, I found it impossible to hold back my rage."
Thomas J. Watson, Jr.

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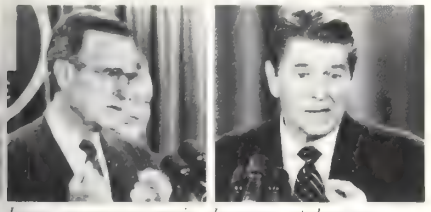
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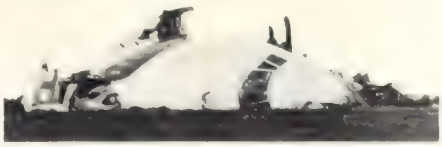
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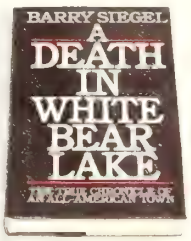


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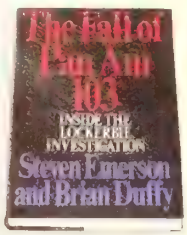


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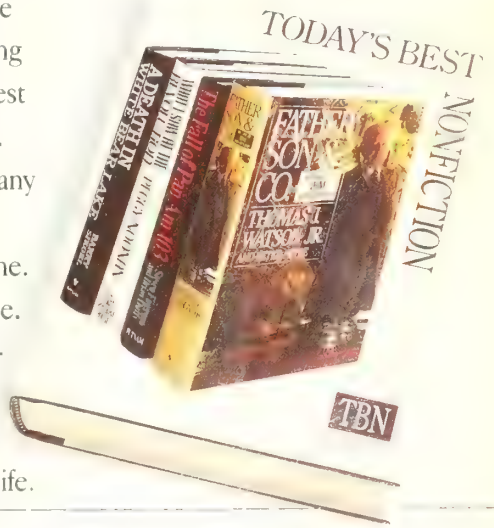
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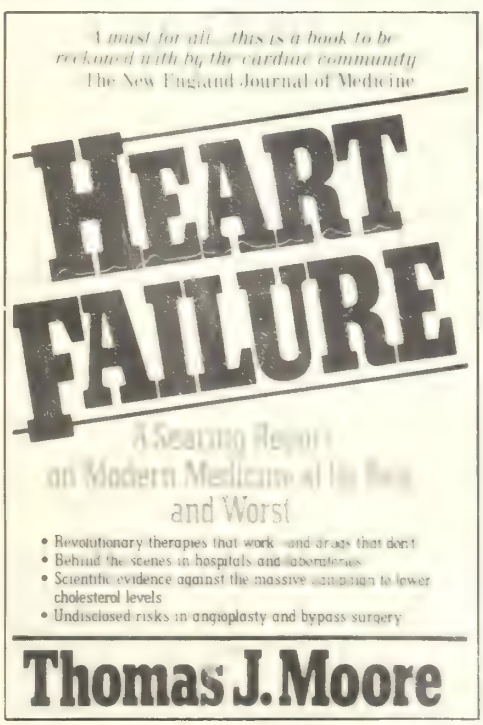
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A TOUCHSTONE BOOK

Signs of Mob Crime

In Marshall Blonsky's annotation ["A (Post)modern (Alleged) Mobster," October] of a photograph of a well-coiffed and -tailored John Gotti he reveals the fashionably critical prejudice for "signs" and misses the real appeal of mobster rhetoric, which does not reside in Gotti's "*bella figura*" in his manner and his dress radiating goodwill." The convincing power of a personage such as Gotti derives from what Aristotle called "inartificial proofs": "those which have not been furnished by ourselves but were already in existence." Gotti's style is composed not of statuesque hairstyles, $1,800 suits, and monogrammed socks but of intimidation, assault, murder, and the like.

Laurence E. Musgrove
Springfield, Ore.

The Line on Drawing Lines

Lewis Lapham's October Notebook, "Lines in the Sand," astutely explains that the real line George Bush drew in the sand in his reaction to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait is the line between rich and poor. Yet Lapham misses the uncanny historical richness of Bush's inadvertently apt slogan.

In the early sixteenth century, on his way to plundering South America's last great empire, Francisco Pizarro drew history's first sandy line. He challenged his thirteen weakhearted conquistadores with roughly these words: "I draw a line in the sand. If you stay on that side you remain in Panama to be poor. If you join on this side you go to Peru to be rich."

The historical and political dimensions of Bush's and Pizarro's common macho symbol-making are almost too suggestive. Bush is, after all, the latest plunderer of South and Central America; he, invader of Panama, is also the most vocal about Saddam Hussein's "naked aggression against a sovereign nation." Moreover, the line between rich and poor is indeed timeless and universal, joining issues of profit and plunder from 1532 to 1991, from the Americas to the Middle East.

Eric Wertheimer
Philadelphia

NOTEBOOK

A pardoner's tale

By Lewis H. Lapham

A city for sale, and doomed when it finds a buyer.

—Jugurtha, commentary on Rome, c. 104 B.C.

As an editor with twenty years' service in the media trades, I count myself reasonably well versed in both the cunning and the sorrow of Grub Street. I'm used to the effrontery of book publishers and the insolence of critics, and when I read the memoirs of an old politician or a new talk-show host, I know that I might as well be reading the report of last week's press conference with the late Elvis Presley. Presented with two variants of more or less artful fraud (Hitler's *Diaries*, say, and Henry Kissinger's *White House Years*), I can draw the fine distinctions between the modified fact and the self-serving lie.

Book publishing was never a business for the pure in heart. As long ago as 1839 in Paris, Balzac took the trouble to codify the nine standard swindles with which the publishers of his acquaintance gulled both the writer and the reader. Maupassant amended and revised the rules of unctuous procedure in 1885, and George Orwell did the same in 1946. Then, as now, most publishers would rather sponsor works of literary merit, but few of them can afford to make a habit of the practice. The temper of the times demands freaks and wonders, and the publishers meet the specifications of the market with the iconography of the rich and famous. It doesn't matter if the celebrities can think, or write, or even talk. The wisdom of Millie, the White House dog, commands a higher value in the bookstores than the aphorisms of Seneca. It is always possible to hire ghostwriters, invent scenes of an imaginary childhood, provide wise sayings and dire prophecies, and construct heartwarming anecdotes about the subject's intimate acquaintance with a sexual fetish, a notorious crime, or a large sum of money. What matters is the manufacture of an object wrapped in a photograph familiar to thousands of people passing by B. Dalton's window in downtown St. Louis.

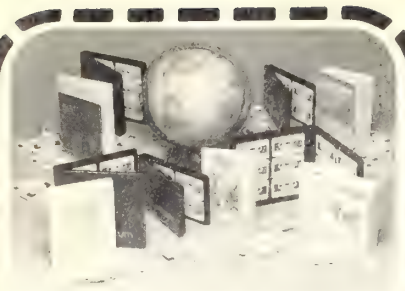
Numerous publishers have explained these subtleties to me over a period of years, and until last November I considered myself current with the vanguard of literary cynicism. I was, as usual, wrong.

On the day after last November's election, the morning mail brought a book from Simon and Schuster bearing the title *An American Life*, by Ronald Reagan, and when I read the blurb on the dust jacket, I knew that giants still walked the earth. With consummate, barefaced gall, the publishers presented the book as both an "autobiography" and "a significant work of history." Either statement standing by itself would be offensive enough; joined together they achieved a degree of shamelessness that I had thought beyond the reach of the propagandist's art. To imagine that Mr. Reagan would take the trouble to write anything at all (a simple, declarative sentence, much less a manuscript running to 726 pages) is to imagine that he reads Voltaire in French and devotes his afternoons to the study of the Kirtland's warbler and the Burgess Shale.

Curious to see how the publishers justified the sales pitch, I turned to the acknowledgments page and noticed that Reagan (or whoever was writing the page in his name) conceded that he "had a great deal of help, for which I am most appreciative." The otherwise anonymous author went on to express his gratitude to himself in a phrase as ingenuous as a campaign promise: "Robert Lindsey, a talented writer, was with me every step of the way."

The book doesn't bear reading. By way of taking the measure of the text I read the whole of Part Five (pages 469–543), entitled "Iran-Contra." The sequence of events subsumed under those two words is one to which I have given considerable thought and study, and so I have some basis for comparison with Reagan's rendering of the same chronology. The account presented in a plausible imitation of Reagan's voice assigns the blame for any inconvenience or embarrassment to Israel, the United States Congress, the American media, and the accidents of fate. The author excuses himself by saying that he relied on his friends and counselors, and besides, he was busy with other, more important matters elsewhere in the world. The Reagan of the book, like the Reagan of the White House script and the trumped-up press release, maintains the fiction of his perfect innocence, repeatedly insisting that he never traded weapons for hostages and never dreamed of dishonoring the law, the Constitution, or his oath of office. The tone of voice is cloying and sweet, like "God Bless America" arranged by Lawrence Welk and played, at a slow tempo, on an accordion. If the reader thinks that judgment too harsh, I refer him to the final paragraphs of discussion of the Iran-Contra deal. The passage is consistent with the remainder of the text:

> On the day that John Poindexter came to the Oval Office to resign, I didn't ask him the questions I now wish I had. If we hadn't acted so quickly, maybe he and North would have told me some of the things that are still a mystery to me after all this time.
>
> If I could do it over again, I would bring both of them into the Oval Office and say, "Okay, John and Ollie, level



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with me. Tell me what really happene and what it is that you have been hidin from me. Tell me everything."

If I had done that, at least I wouldn be sitting here, writing this book, sti ignorant of some of the things tha went on during the Iran-Contra affai

The demonstrable falsity of A *American Life* leaves unanswered th questions of motive and result, and can imagine the lenient reader askin why Reagan's book is any worse tha Nixon's book, or Kissinger's book, c Millie's book. Reagan, after all, is a amiable fellow who thought he wa doing everybody a good turn, and people take comfort in his homilie and his smile, then where's the harr in that?

Surely Reagan cannot be blame for an act of all-American commerce What else is an old song-and-danc man to do? If a Japanese automobil company wants to rent his presenc for a speech in Beverly Hills or a serie of lectures in Tokyo, why not charg the going rate of $25,000 a night or $ million a week? If he bestows th blessing of his name on a bad book i return for a reputed $6 million as a advance against royalties, how re prove him for accepting a fee muc smaller than the sums routinely pai to entertainers as prominent as Dusti Hoffman or Joe Montana?

And how blame Simon and Schus ter, which is owned by Paramount which in turn possibly hopes to em ploy Reagan as an actor (costarrin with Bob Hope and George Burns i the sequel to *The Golden Girls*) or a an agent for another book deal? *A* publisher is only as rich as his last sale and in some future negotiation th former president might agree to serv as a lobbyist putting in a telephon call to Margaret Thatcher (for he own memoirs) or to Senator Jess Helms for a favorable reading of th antitrust laws.

Certainly the big media found n fault with Reagan's gerrymandere life. The *New York Times*, ABC tele vision, and *Time* magazine receive the publication of the book in th adoring posture of the Magi come t Bethlehem to praise the arrival o good news. Christopher Lehmann Haupt, the principal critic for th daily *Times*, gratefully accepted th

fiction that Reagan somehow had written the text. Choosing his adjectives with the obsequious tact of a salesclerk behind the perfume counter at Bloomingdale's, Lehmann-Haupt discovered in the book a "distinct and personal voice" as well as a "sense of authenticity." Barbara Walters on ABC's *20/20* barely managed to restrain her impulse to kneel. The book, "like the man himself," she pronounced "humorous and gentle."

But the most egregious flattery appeared, not surprisingly, in *Time*, which published expensive excerpts from the book in its November 5 and November 12 issues under the headline AMERICAN DREAMER. The prefatory remarks, written by *Time*'s deputy chief of correspondents, introduced Reagan as "this avuncular American . . . a sweet soul with firm if simple beliefs." The deputy chief of correspondents conceded that "Dutch Reagan's own recollections" might be taken to task on a few niggling points of omission. It was true that the narrative was "celluloid thin," and it was also true that Reagan didn't quite answer all the questions asked by the vicious critics in the meanspirited quarters of the media. But the critics never understood that good old Dutch was a wonderful man forced to bear heartbroken witness to the awful things done (by other people, all of them nasty) to his hope of "morning in America." The critics didn't know, as the deputy chief of correspondents knew, that Reagan "was and remains a stubborn dreamer, a radical reformer out to rid the world of nuclear war and Big Government . . . a man totally without guile operating in a world of cunning rascals."

Trying manfully to edit the tears out of his copy, the deputy chief of correspondents ended his preface with an evocation of that far-off, blessed day in Washington when Reagan stepped forward to deliver his first inaugural address at precisely the same moment that a shaft of sunlight descended through the gray clouds to certify the miracle of his advent.

In a society fortified with some sense of its own dignity and worth, the publication of *An American Life* would be understood as an act of contempt. Contempt for a public that the media deem to be so debased that it will bear any insult and suffer, without objection, any jeering mockery. Contempt for the uses of language and the meaning of words. Contempt for the immense labor with which people struggle to tell the story of what they have seen and thought and known. Contempt for the continuum of human feeling and experience in which people preserve what they have found beautiful as well as useful on their voyage through the gulf of time.

If we accept the Reagan autobiography as anything other than an insult and a mockery, we commit a kind of suicide. History embodies the triumph of memory over the spirit of corruption, and if we deny the truth of our existence, we lose the right to our own names.

The machinery of the big media is as indifferent to the force of intellect as it is to the first person singular. Al-

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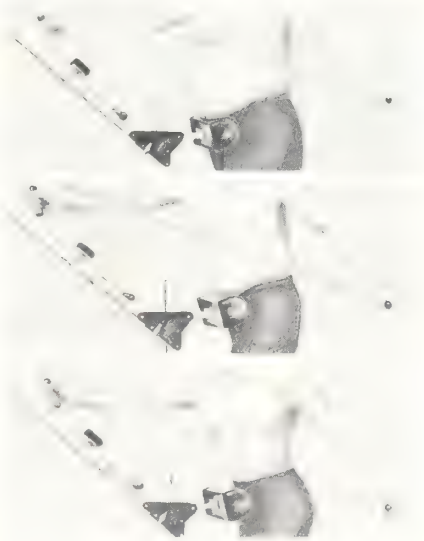
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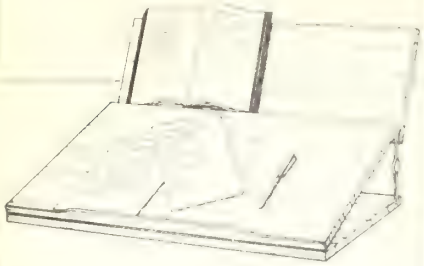


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though the individuals operating the equipment might wish it were otherwise, the media as a collective entity cannot help but speak in the voice of a ventriloquist's dummy, a voice as false as the one in which the artificial Ronald Reagan tells the parable of an artificial life. The media mean to please, never to teach or bear witness. The networks and the big publishing syndicates address themselves not to an answering mind but to an empty and silent crowd. They mount spectacles and sell cures for unhappiness and misfortune. Collectively, they perform the function of the monkish pardoners of medieval Europe who carried on a profitable traffic in Christian relics. To the fourteenth-century markets in superstition the pardoner sold fragments of the true cross and feathers said to have fallen from the wing of the archangel Gabriel. To the twentieth-century trade in desperate wish and childish dream the media sell pages said to have dropped from the hand of a Dutch uncle.

On the Monday following Reagan's cameo appearance with Barbara Walters, one of the darker mysteries of modern communication was revealed to me in a SoHo restaurant by a man who had tuned the tenor of his mind to the lute music of an earlier century. I noticed him as soon as I walked into the place because he looked too expensive for the setting, too sleek and self-assured, too much like a work of art temporarily on loan from the Upper East Side. The restaurant caters to a downtown crowd, mostly writers and would-be writers habitually slow with the rent. The gentleman at the next table looked to be in his middle forties, and he was dressed as if for a photograph advertising Ralph Lauren's theory of the leisure class. The woman with whom he was eating dinner could have posed for the same advertisement—blond, maybe ten years younger than the man, wearing a silk blouse and a strand of reassuringly heavy pearls. They both examined the menu with a diligence befitting their status as model students of the good life. I lost track of them during the soup course, and so it was with some alarm that by the time the salad arrived I noticed that the man had worked himself into a fit of inarticulate rage. More alarmingly, the welter of his confused ill-feeling appeared to be directed at myself.

I had been talking at some length about Reagan and Reagan's rotten book, and the gentleman apparently had taken offense. He didn't wish to be associated with the vilification of a great and true American, but he was too polite to denounce me as a traitor and a spy. Lacking the nerve for speech, he reached into his briefcase for a copy of that morning's *Wall Street Journal*, and then, very carefully, he opened the pages between our two tables as if the double spread of paper were a hospital screen placed next to the bed of a patient afflicted with a contagious disease.

Or maybe he meant the paper to stand between us as a kind of magical shield, like the one that the Red Cross Knight carried to Jerusalem on Holy Crusade. The *Wall Street Journal* faithfully had preserved President Reagan from harm or censure during his two terms in office, and it occurred to me that the corporate gentleman might have endowed the paper with the power of Moses' rod. In his briefcase lying open on the floor I noticed a number of objects believed to express and contain the wonders of modern technology (an electronic calculator, a portable phone, a sheaf of computer spread sheets, a Mont Blanc pen), and I thought of Charles V, the French king who adorned his royal chapel with his collection of relics and who, by the time he was thirty, in the year 1368, had acquired, among other objects, the top of John the Baptist's head, Christ's swaddling clothes, the crown of thorns, and a flask of the Virgin's milk.

I could imagine the corporate gentleman acquiring the text of *An American Life* in the same spirit of humility that so inspired and uplifted the pious king. But I didn't think that his lady friend would be as easily satisfied. At a price of $25 the copy, she presumably would expect a further sign of Reagan's beatitude, and I could imagine her asking the salesclerk to repeat the publisher's guarantee to the effect that Reagan's photograph on the back cover would, given world enough and time, weep genuine tears. ■

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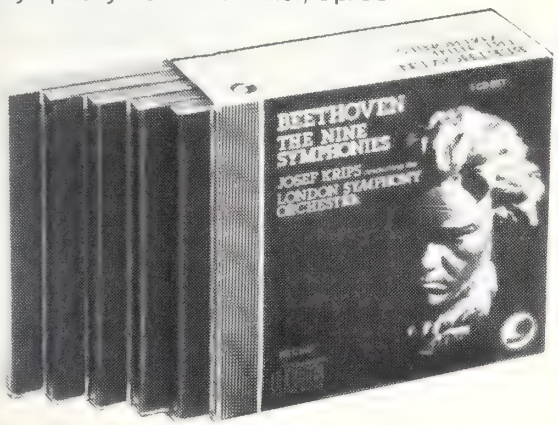
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HARPER'S INDEX

Hours after the 1991 tax increase was passed that President Bush promised to "hold the line on taxes" from now on : 13

Number of the 31 candidates the President campaigned for last fall who lost : 23

Number of minutes Congress spent last October debating the administration's request for new S&L bailout funds : 30

Number of minutes Congress spent last October debating a proposal to renovate the Capitol hairdressing salon : 40

Percentage of Americans who say the group with too little influence in government is people like themselves : 91

Amount the Department of Veterans' Affairs paid in 1989 in benefits to people who are dead : $5,700,000

Percentage of Medicaid-application rejections that result from problems with paperwork or documentation : 60

Number of Fortune 500 companies whose personnel departments have employed genetic screening or monitoring : 20

Average percentage change, since 1989, in the square footage of a corporate vice president's office : −25

Combined value of the mortgages given by East Harlem bank branches to local residents in 1989 : $2,413,000

Combined value of the deposits in East Harlem bank branches in 1989 : $221,000,000

Number of White House changes incorporated into the civil rights bill before the President vetoed it last fall : 30

Number of members of Congress who have sons or daughters serving in the Persian Gulf : 2

Number of months a U.S. soldier can function effectively in the Saudi desert, according to the U.S. Army : 6

Pounds of Saudi Arabian sand the army has imported to study its effect on military equipment : 150

Number of on-the-job injuries to Library of Congress employees in 1989 that "involved hot substances" : 15

Number that "involved floors or other walking surfaces" : 51 (see page 26)

Chances of a Shuttle crash in the next 4 years, assuming all systems are 98 percent reliable, according to NASA : 1 in 2

Number of sightings of a triangular UFO reported in southern Belgium in the last year : 2,600

ercentage change in sales of the predictions of Nostradamus at Waldenbooks in the month after the Iraqi invasion : +400

Endowment of the Jackie Mason Lectureship in Contemporary Judaism at Oxford University : £125,000

Estimated amount Princess Diana has spent on underwear since marrying Prince Charles : $26,460

Percentage of male college students who say that "some women look as though they're just asking to be raped" : 84

Average number of days it takes to try and sentence a defendant to death in Ohio : 22

Average number of days it takes in Georgia : 3

Percentage of black New Yorkers who believe it is possible that AIDS is a plot to kill blacks : 30

Total contributions by individuals in 1989 to New York City's Bide-a-Wee Home Association for pets : $1,700,000

Total contributions by individuals in 1989 to New York City's Coalition for the Homeless : $622,000

University of Colorado employees traveling to the Orange Bowl this month to handle mascot Ralphie the Buffalo : 12

Number of people who attended the funeral in 1989 of Reveille IV, the collie that was the mascot of Texas A&M : 10,000

Rank of January, among months in which the fewest marriages take place : 1

Rank of 1989, among the last 20 years with the least snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere : 1

Ratio of Finns to saunas in Finland : 4:1

Percentage of Iowans who don't know what "auld lang syne" means : 91

Percentage of Americans in the Northeast who say they like to be told their waiter's or waitress's name : 57

Percentage of Americans in the West who say this : 72

Ounces of Coke called for in the recipe for Fruited Pork Chops, in "Cooking with Coca-Cola" : 4 (see page 38)

Packets of Kool-Aid a chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars has sent to soldiers in the Persian Gulf : 5,040

Average number of calories burned by melting an ice cube in one's mouth : 2.3

Figures cited are the latest available as of November 1990. Sources are listed [illegible]
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READINGS

[Letter]

WAS THE RIGHT RIGHT ALL ALONG?

From a letter to a friend by Robert Heilbroner, published under the title "The World After Communism," in the Fall 1990 issue of Dissent. *The journal invited its contributors and readers to respond. Heilbroner is professor emeritus at the New School for Social Research in New York City. He is the author of many books on economics, including* The Worldly Philosophers.

Dear _____.

In the face of the momentous events of the past year, I've been giving a lot of thought to socialism and capitalism—and what would seem to be history's verdict on the contest between the two systems.

I start with the premises we are all familiar with. There has been a massive collapse of the framework of centrally planned socialism and an equally unmistakable, although not so dramatic, decline in the magnetic appeal of "socialism" in the capitalist world. Socialism as an organizing idea is still powerful in the less-developed areas of the world—Peru has its Shining Path and China may face another Mao-like regime—but in the more-developed nations, "socialism" as a distinct social objective has disappeared. Nothing is left of it but a better-run capitalism.

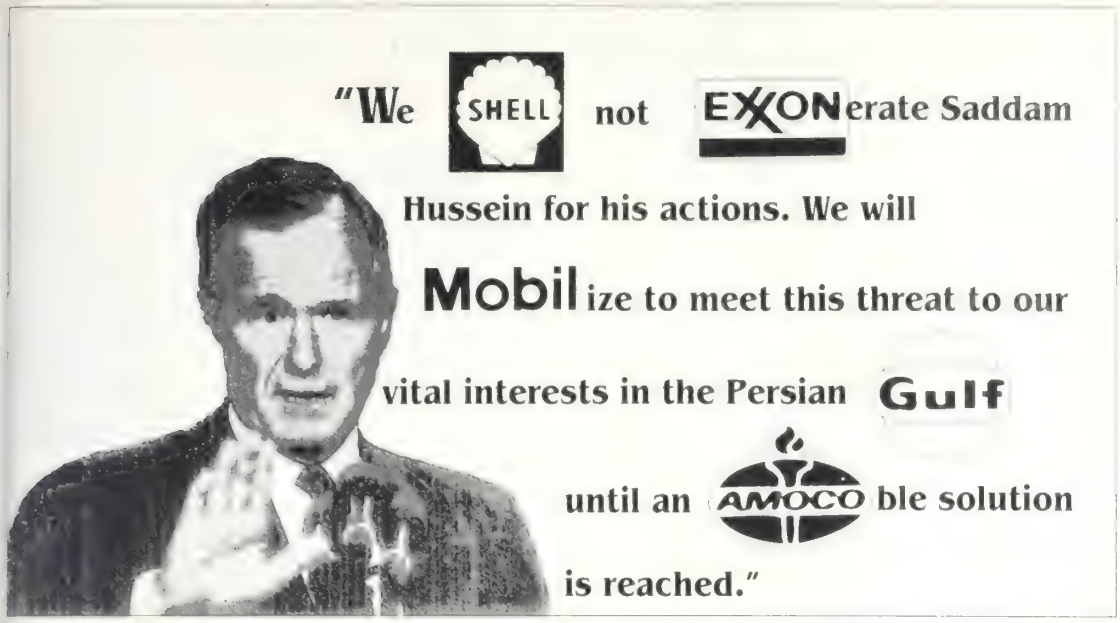
The other side of this large-scale development is that capitalism has been as unmistakable a success as socialism has been a failure. In saying this, I recognize, of course, capitalism's difficulties: slow growth since the early Seventies, serious unemployment in Europe, worsening income distribution in the United States, international monetary disorder, the foreign-debt dilemma. Nevertheless, there has been no major system-threatening crisis. The problems that beset capitalism appear to be such as inhere in the range of contradictions that one would expect to arise as a normal consequence of its mode of operation. Moreover, capitalism as a world system has certainly expanded, and many of its problems could perhaps be seen as merely the by-product of that expansion. Most important of all, I do not see any signs of political disaffection within the capitalist world. On the contrary, its economic patriotism has never been higher. If this is not success, what is?

All this, of course, is not news. What I find startling and disconcerting is that these massive historical trends have been largely unanticipated. The conventional wisdom with respect to socialism has been that it was, or would be, a success and that the future very likely belonged to it. The same wisdom with respect to capitalism was that its future was clouded.

This was the prognosis of Joseph Schumpeter and an older generation of social thinkers. But what voice of the present generation has anticipated the demise of socialism or the "triumph of capitalism"? Not a single writer in the Marxian tradition! Are there any in the left-centrist group? None that I can think of, including myself. As for the center itself—the Samuelsons, Solows, Glazers, Lipsets, Bells, and so on—I believe that many expected capitalism to experience serious and mounting, if not fatal, problems and anticipated some form of socialism to be the organizing force of the twenty-first century.

That leaves the right. Here is the part that's hard to swallow. It has been the Friedmans, Hayeks, von Miseses, *e tutti quanti* who have maintained that capitalism would flourish and that socialism would develop incurable ailments. All three have regarded capitalism as the "natural" system of free men; all have maintained that left to its own devices capitalism would achieve material growth more successfully than any other system.

From this admittedly impressionistic and in-



From People's Daily World, *published in New York City.*

complete sampling I draw the following discomforting generalization: *The farther to the right one looks, the more prescient has been the historical foresight; the farther to the left, the less so.*

How much credence can one invest in such a generalization? Here I proceed with much greater trepidation.

The first temptation is to explain the problem away: Von Mises and Hayek and Friedman were right, but only in the sense of having picked the winner. Their underlying arguments are not convincing, however, so their claim to social foresight is invalid.

I think there is something to this. Von Mises's reasons for the "impossibility" of socialism—that it had no means of establishing a rational pricing system—do not appear to be those that have pulled it down. Irrational pricing certainly played a role in its economic difficulties, but its breakdown appears to have been caused by political rather than economic irrationalities. The planning authorities mispriced goods not just because they lacked adequate economic information about demand (as von Mises wrote) but because "efficient" pricing would have created unendurable political tensions.

The sociological argument is more impressive, if interpreted generously. Hayek and von Mises argue that socialism's dependence on planning strongly encourages political hierarchy and unfreedom, culminating in totalitarianism ("the worst rise [to the] top," as Hayek wrote). This is clearly not an argument easily shrugged aside. Although neither author develops the connection between dictatorship and massive misallocation of resources or serious loss of social morale, it is not difficult to supply the missing links. The generous reader, at least, can find in their writings the basis of an explanation for the demise of socialism.

In similar fashion, however, the conservative arguments in favor of capitalism also suffer from serious defects. State intervention in the market, the argument goes, is inherently inimical to capitalism's vitality. I need hardly say that these interventions can also be viewed as the cause of capitalism's continued vitality. Another defect in the conservative case is its conception of capitalism as static. In the conservative view, capitalism has no self-generated tendencies to instability, stagnation, widening gap in income distribution, etc. This is a view that ignores the past, and seems, therefore, a poor guide to the future.

So there are reasons to look askance at—indeed, perhaps to discredit—the conservative anticipations of the decline of socialism and the triumph of capitalism. I would, myself, be quite content with this conclusion were it not for one thing. The left's reasonings also must have been faulty, for on the basis of reasonings that the conservatives neglected, the left arrived at conclusions we now know to be totally at variance with the facts.

If the cogency of the reasoning on both sides is inadequate or unconvincing, this suggests the need for another line of inquiry. Perhaps the question we need to explore is whether there are fundamental differences between the "visions" of conservatives and radicals—the unspoken premises from which they begin. These visions are surprisingly difficult to articulate. Take the concept of "individuality versus sociality" as the starting point for social conceptualizing. This sounds promising until one realizes that it cuts both ways. One thinks of conservative thought as fundamentally identified with the vision of *individualism*—neoclassical economics is an example—until we remember that there is a powerful countertheme of sociality, for instance, in the work of Coleridge or Burke or Hayek. So, too, radical thought is often characterized as "starting from" society—the individual as the "sum of many social determinations," in Marx's famous phrase. But again there is the Marxian insistence on the need to *emancipate* individual human beings. From what? From their social entanglements.

When I try to discover some unambiguous difference in the unspoken premises of conservatives and radicals, only one idea strikes me as unassailable. It lies in the two visions' different conceptions of "human nature." The difference, as I see it, lies in the diametrically opposed assumptions as to the fixity or malleability of human behavior. Conservative thought insists that there is a core that resists historical change. To my mind the most convincing evidence of this fixity is the universal need for psychological security, derived from the inescapable trials and anxieties of the infant condition. It is this "psychoanalytic" aspect of human nature that endows it with immutable characteristics—aggression, narcissism, identification, among others—without which much of human behavior becomes incomprehensible.

The radical view sees the inner "nature" of humankind through different lenses. Human nature is conceived as plastic and therefore capable of being shaped through social experience. Genetic and psychoanalytic endowments, though not denied, are judged of limited importance. There are more degrees of freedom in the radical vision, more play between the Kingdom of Necessity and that of Actuality.

It follows, of course, that radical views are inherently more optimistic than conservative ones. Through radical glasses society always appears to fall far short of its potential, whereas through conservative ones it always expresses inescapable and insistent needs of abiding human nature. Conversely, the conservative view is always darker than the radical. It is more concerned with avoiding catastrophe than with achieving unrealized possibilities. It cannot be progress-oriented or teleological in the way that radical thought must be.

If the conservative vision does indeed more accurately anticipate historical development than its opposite, to what aspects of that vision can we ascribe that superiority? I believe the

[Epithets]

DEAR CONGRESSMAN JERKWEED:

From the "Off Highway Vehicle Political Enemy List," in the Sahara Club Newsletter, No. 6. The Sahara Club, an anti-environmentalist group based in Granada Hills, California, opposes laws that prohibit use of off-road vehicles in certain areas. The congressional representatives listed below support restrictions on such vehicles.

1. The Honorable James H. Bil—Wait a minute! Why should we call these jerks "Honorable" anything? Why not call them what they really are? Here's the way the Sahara Club feels they should be addressed:

1. The Jerkweed James H. Bilbray (Nev.), 319 Cannon Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-5965.
2. The Pinhead Bill Richardson (N.M.), 332 Cannon Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-6190.
3. The Buttwad Wayne Owens (Utah), 1728 Longworth Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-3011.
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5. The Scuzzbucket Bruce F. Vento (Minn.), 2304 Rayburn Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-6631.
6. The Rodent Mel Levine (Calif.), 132 Cannon Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-6451.
7. The Venereal Peter De Fazio (Ore.), 1729 Longworth Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-6416.
8. The Tapeworm Rod Chandler (Wash.), 223 Cannon Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-7761.
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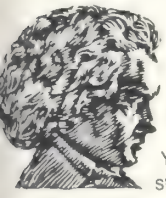
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crucial element is its view of human nature, a view I can abbreviate by saying that it recognizes that behavior, like the heart, has its reasons that reason knows not. (Curiously, most conservative thinkers detest Freud.) Conservative apothegms often reflect these recognitions —"Plus ça change . . ." "Power tends to corrupt . . ."—which always surprise us with their penetration, much as we may dislike them. It is not a coincidence, I think, that there are no such apothegms of the left (none that I can think of anyway).

The conclusion to which I come may be disappointingly bland and vague. It is that the radical orientation toward change, progress, perfectibility, social salvation—attitudes that I am not prepared to discard—must be joined with conservative reservations about those very possibilities. I have already spoken about the static quality of conservative thought—which is, to my mind, its fatal flaw. While we need the understanding of historical change that is the very hallmark of radical social analysis, it is also painfully clear that this is not enough. It may offer accurate anticipations of the movements of parts of the social whole, but it does not embrace, or at times even perceive, other movements or nonmovements or countermovements that prove to be of incomparably greater importance in determining the overall outcome of things. To be a radical conservative or a conservative radical appears to offer the best chance to position oneself wisely with respect to the future—not to *predict* it, which only a fool could aspire to do, but to prepare for its blows and to secure its advances as best we can.

[Postcard]

WISH YOU WEREN'T HERE

From a postcard sent last October to voters who had requested absentee ballots in primarily black precincts in Gregg County, Texas. Typically, 90 percent of black voters in Texas vote Democratic; Ron Brown, the Democratic National Committee chairman, has charged that the postcard was part of Republican "voter intimidation tactics." According to Texas electoral law, if a voter discards an absentee ballot, he or she cannot then vote in person.

BLACK AMERICANS! THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST OF US DIED FOR OUR RIGHT TO WALK PROUDLY INTO THE VOTING PLACE AND CAST OUR VOTE!

YOUR NAME IS ON A LIST AT THE COURTHOUSE that indicates you requested a MAIL BALLOT. Many of the 2,045 [who requested absentee ballots] swore that they were too disabled to go, or that their RELIGION prevented them from going, to the polls to vote! Did YOU swear to a lie that takes away YOUR RIGHT TO BE A *PROUD* AMERICAN, or did SOMEONE do it for you? (VOTER FRAUD IS PUNISHABLE BY LAW AND SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY.)

Any so-called leader who asked YOU to send YOUR ballot by mail will cast HIS or HER own vote standing in the polling place and will brag that THE BLACK VOTE WAS DELIVERED IN AN ENVELOPE!

YOU CAN STAND TALL, HOLD YOUR HEAD HIGH, AND WALK THROUGH THE DOOR OF YOUR POLLING PLACE ON ELECTION DAY, November 6, from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M.

In honor of the many who fought and died for your right to walk into the polls, THROW THAT MAIL BALLOT IN THE TRASH! THIS IS 1990. SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OUR CHILDREN—GO TO THE POLLS!

[Rules]

THE GAME IN THE GULF

From the rule book for Desert Shield, a war-simulation board game sold by Victory Games, a Baltimore company. The game, which sells for forty dollars, is designed for two players: One plays the United States; the other, Iraq. Certain events in the course of the game are determined by the roll of a ten-sided die.

Game Length

The game can be played to conclusion in three hours, assuming only one week is played. Each additional week of play will take an additional three hours. The game ends whenever one player has achieved his Victory Conditions or when one hundred UN negotiation points have been scored.

Design Note: UN negotiation points reflect the degree to which the world is frightened enough to allow the Iraqis to keep what they have illegally gained instead of facing the consequences of further conflict. The kinds of activities that would cause the game to reach the UN

nvoice]

WHAT MICHELLE PFEIFFER NEEDS

At right is the bill submitted to Terry Koppel, Esquire magazine's art director, by Diane Scott, a New York City photo retoucher, for her work on the photographs of Michelle Pfeiffer that appeared on the cover of the December 1990 Esquire, left. Scott has retouched several recent Esquire covers. The article on Pfeiffer was titled "Michelle Pfeiffer as a Work in Progress."




DIANE SCOTT ASSOCIATES, INC.

negotiation-point threshold include the cutting off of oil and the use of nuclear weapons. If the United States has not yet achieved its objectives (see *Victory Conditions*) by the time the threshold has been reached, then a negotiated settlement ensues and Iraq has won.

Political Rules

A de facto state of war exists between the United States and Iraq. All forces on both sides are active. U.S. forces may not cross into or overfly the territory of Iraq. (For the purposes of this scenario Iraqi territory is Iraq, Kuwait, and the Neutral Territory.)

Iraqi forces may enter U.S. territory, but once they do so all restrictions on U.S. player movement are lifted for the remainder of the game.

During each game-turn, after U.S. forces have conducted a combat die roll of any type, a nuclear-release die roll can be made. The U.S. player must make, in succession, two die rolls of one, or the nuclear release does not occur. *Note:* If the Iraqi player has used chemical weapons, then the U.S. player immediately makes a nuclear-release die roll. In this case, just one die roll is made; it is successful if the U.S. player rolls a one.

Iran is neutral in this scenario. No units from either side may enter Iran, although a random event may allow the Iraqi player to move the Iranian tankers and possibly to control air and naval units.

The U.S.S.R. can become activated only through a random event.

Random Political Events

During the Global Political Phase of each turn, one player rolls the die. If he rolls a ten, a Random Political Event occurs. Any other die roll has no effect.

If a Random Political Event is called for, refer to the Random Political Event Table and roll the die, instituting whatever event is called for at that time.

Random Political Event Table

1. Israel supports the United States by sending three air units (one F-15, two F-16's). These air units may sortie once per game-turn. Five UN negotiation points are scored each game-turn that an Israeli air or missile strike occurs.

2. Jordan covertly breaks the embargo. Increase the Iraqi supply-point reinforcements by ten supply points per game-turn.

3. Iraq succeeds in launching one prototype Tammuz 2 ICBM and has struck the United States. Twenty-five UN negotiation points are scored and the United States automatically has nuclear release.

4. The U.S.S.R. sends advisers to help the United States with the chemical-warfare threat. The United States adds to its force a Soviet Chemical Warfare Brigade.

5. The U.S.S.R. enters the war on the U.S. side.

6. Abu Nidal executes a suicide car-bomb attack on U.S. CentCom HQ. On a die roll of ten, the U.S. CentCom HQ takes one hit.

7–10. Iran covertly attempts to break the oil embargo and declares a jihad. Iraq gains control

[Street Signs]

CAUTION, ARTIST AT PLAY





These signs are part of an ongoing project by Christopher True, a Worcester, Massachusetts, artist. True has made and posted twenty signs in various locations around the state. The sign at left was posted near Smith College in Northampton; someone removed it after three days. The sign at right was placed near Harvard's Kennedy School of Government; it disappeared within six weeks.

of the Iranian oil tankers and three Silkworm missile units.

Victory Conditions

Variant Three (President Bush, with UN backing, decides to go on the offensive and drive Iraq out of Kuwait):

☐ U.S. player wins a Marginal Victory if no U.S. positions are controlled by Iraq and Saddam Hussein is dead.

☐ U.S. player wins a Substantive Victory if no U.S. positions are controlled by Iraq and the United States has captured Kuwait City.

☐ U.S. player wins a Decisive Victory if the Substantive Victory conditions are met and no Iraqi units are within the borders of Kuwait.

☐ Iraqi player wins if the United States does not achieve any level of victory.

Variant Four (identical to Variant Three, except the objective is to conquer Iraq):

☐ U.S. player wins a Marginal Victory if no U.S. positions are controlled by Iraq and the United States has captured Kuwait City and no Iraqi units are within the borders of Kuwait.

☐ U.S. player wins a Substantive Victory if the Marginal Victory conditions are met and he captures one Iraqi position.

☐ U.S. player wins a Decisive Victory if the Marginal Victory conditions are met and he captures Baghdad.

☐ Iraqi player wins if the United States does not achieve any level of victory.

[Essay]

THE GULF, THROUGH GERMAN EYES

From "The Once and Future Reich," by Walter Russell Mead, in the Fall 1990 issue of World Policy Journal. *Mead, a fellow at the World Policy Institute, is writing a book on American foreign policy in the post–Cold War era. His last article for* Harper's Magazine, *"On the Road to Ruin," appeared in the March 1990 issue.*

With communism on the wane, Washington appears to have found a new global foe. Our new foreign policy, invoked to justify our intervention in the Persian Gulf, is to contain aggression and lawbreaking on the international scene: scoundrelism generally, not communism merely. Moreoever, Washington demands that Germany, Japan, and our other allies—who were never consulted about this strategic policy shift—rally behind U.S. leadership in this new crusade as they did in the old one.

Washington's stance is likely to accelerate the breakdown of the old Western alliance and to place increasing and unnecessary strains on our relationship with Germany. Already we are hearing an outcry in Washington over the lack of military and financial assistance in the Gulf

from Germany and Japan. Germany's response —that its commitments in Eastern Europe and the former German Democratic Republic leave it with very little cash to spare, and that these commitments should also be viewed as part of a joint Western effort—cuts no ice with Washington's moralists. Powerful voices in Washington find Germany's preoccupation with events on its own soil to be "insulting," "disappointing," and "enormously distressing."

These tender sensibilities had better brace for new shocks. West Germany went along with Washington's containment of the Soviet Union because this policy was clearly in its interest. But Germany has a much less immediate interest in the containment of "global instability" than we do. For Germany, the global crusade for law and order pales in importance before several bigger problems closer to home: reunification, the threat of chaos in the Soviet Union, and revolutionary change on its eastern frontiers.

The Middle East is probably the worst place in the world to put German support for American policy to the test. In its enthusiasm for its Gulf adventure, American opinion has failed to note that German interests in the Middle East do not necessarily depend on a successful conclusion to the U.S. intervention in the Gulf. The United States has inherited Britain's dominant role in the Middle East, and our strength there is one of the keys to our status as a global power. The rough division of the Arab world into populous states without oil reserves and oil-rich states with small populations has been a critical element in twentieth-century Anglo-American Middle Eastern strategy. The weak Gulf sheikhdoms depend on an outside power for their defense; U.S. ability to provide that defense is our trump card in the region. Our role in the defense of the region assures us of the economic support of the Gulf sheikhdoms in the face of the increasing structural weakness of the dollar. In exchange for our protection, they are willing to conduct their business and to hold hefty portions of their investment portfolios in dollars, this despite the continuing decline in the dollar's value compared with other major currencies. Without the support of these oil-rich countries, the dollar's position would be extremely weak and the United States would find itself in an unpleasant new era in economics.

Germany has less interest in the defense of the Gulf sheikhdoms and feels less threatened by the pan-Arab nationalism espoused by Saddam Hussein than does the United States. Without any immediate prospect of replacing the United States as a Middle Eastern power, Germany is more interested in the flow of oil than in the region's boundaries or the attitudes of its leaders toward a settlement with Israel.

American opinion generally overlooks a truth that European and Japanese opinion seldom does: that from the standpoint of oil consumers, the unification of the Arab populations and oil resources would not necessarily be a bad thing. A unified Arab nation would need predictable oil revenues to support its development and consumption objectives. For Europeans generally, a redistribution of the revenues of the Gulf sheikhdoms that benefited the nations of the Maghreb might help reduce immigration pressures. It would also assure European manufacturers of substantial and profitable business meeting the needs of Arab populations with money to spend.

High-flown talk of a "new international order" should not blind us to the fact that the in-

[Letter]

. . . AND PAUL *IS* DEAD

This letter was sent last October to Defense Secretary Dick Cheney by C. B. Scott Jones, a special assistant to Senator Claiborne Pell, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Jones, a former naval intelligence officer who studies paranormal phenomena for Pell, is investigating whether reversed audiotapes can reveal information or thoughts hidden in normal speech.

Dear Dick:

By a technology known as Reverse Speech Therapy, several of us have been following statements made by principal actors involved in the current Persian Gulf crisis.

In statements made about Iraq by President Bush, Secretary of State Baker, and yourself, a word that we have never seen in a speech reversal has appeared. The word is "Simone."

I mention this situation in case it is a code word that it would not be in the national interest to reveal.

If the word means nothing special to you, this is a nonevent, just another mystery in a new technology we are developing.

If the word is significant, please contact me and I will provide details about the technology and assist in any way that I can in whatever the situation may be.

Warm regards,
C. B. Scott Jones

terests of Americans and America's allies will not always coincide in the post–Cold War era. Washington may well be able to wring additional concessions in the Gulf from Bonn, but the costs of such concessions for U.S.-German relations will be high. In the emerging world order, good relations with Germany are as essential as those with Tokyo and Moscow. If the potential for a constructive global partnership between Washington and Berlin is to be realized, Washington must begin to understand Germany's point of view and stop mistaking its own interests for universal principles of morality.

[Report]

BEWARE THE KILLER CARD CATALOGUE

From the Library of Congress Annual Injury Report, distributed to upper-management personnel last fall. An attached memo states that "Library employees experience entirely too many injuries when we consider that the work of Library employees is not hazardous." The total cost in injury compensation for fiscal year 1989 was $723,781.

Analysis of the 344 injuries identifies specific contributing factors for the majority of the mishaps. The most frequently occurring contributing factors are summarized below.

What the Employee Was Doing When Injured

☐ Forty-four employees were *walking and fell* (eighteen cases of lost workdays).
☐ Twenty-four were performing *material-handling* tasks such as moving carts/boxes of books, moving office equipment, etc. (fourteen cases of lost workdays).

How the Injured Was Going About the Work

☐ One hundred and nine involved *reaching, stretching, handling* activities (twenty cases of lost workdays).
☐ Seventeen were simply *sitting* (five cases of lost workdays).
☐ Twenty-four were *standing* (six cases of lost workdays).

How the Mishap Occurred

☐ Twenty-seven involved *tables, shelves, or desks* (six cases of lost workdays).
☐ Fifty-one involved *floors or other walking surfaces* (sixteen cases of lost workdays).
☐ Twenty involved *doors* (four cases of lost workdays).
☐ Fifteen involved *hot substances* (two cases of lost workdays).

Type of Mishap

Forty-nine employees *struck against* something (eight cases of lost workdays).
☐ Forty-five employees *were struck by* something (ten cases of lost workdays).
☐ Forty-six employees *were caught in or rubbed against* something (five cases of lost workdays).
☐ Thirty-eight employees *overexerted themselves* (eighteen cases of lost workdays).

SELECTED
CASE REVIEWS

Description: An employee was sitting in an older-style wood armchair when he leaned against the arm and it broke. The employee fell, striking his arm against the broken section of the chair. Lost workdays: thirty-one. Pay compensation, medical: $3,991. Recommendation: Never lean heavily to one side or backward when sitting in chairs. Be especially watchful when sitting in wood chairs, as construction is not usually substantial.

Description: Employee suffered an unspecified injury to her wrist when she tried to close her overloaded, overstuffed desk drawer. The supervisor performed a cursory investigation and found no fault or cause for the injury. When the safety specialist investigated, he found the injured employee's work area to be in a general state of disarray. All desk drawers were stuffed to the point of overflowing, with the center drawer estimated to contain at least a hundred loose pens and pencils. When opening or closing the drawer, the pens/pencils caused jamming. Injury potential in this case results from the employee's own work habits and management's failure to establish/require compliance with accepted office practices. Lost workdays: eighty-one. Pay compensation, medical: $7,895 to date. Recommendation: Management must establish and enforce reasonable work/office practices. Employees *must* be discouraged from hoarding materials when doing so will create potentially unsafe conditions.

Description: Employee strained her leg when she slipped on a ballpoint pen on the floor. She caught herself and did not fall. Lost workdays: sixteen. Pay compensation, medical: $1,506 to date. Recommendation: Be alert for obstacles on walking surfaces. Small things such as paper clips, pencils, rubber bands, etc., often contribute to injuries. Be responsible for your own safety and always give your fullest attention to the task you're performing, even if it is only walking.

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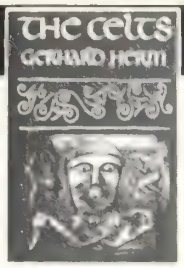
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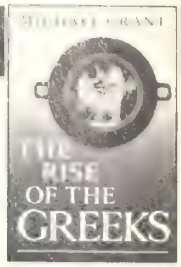
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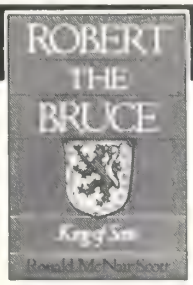
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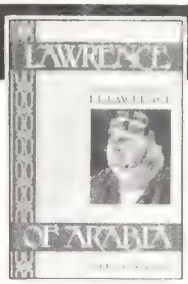
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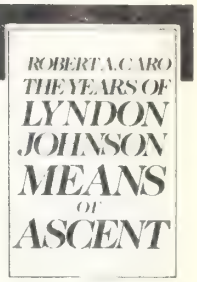
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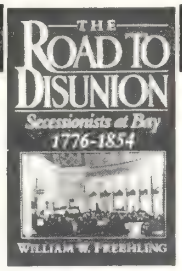
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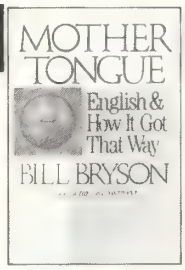
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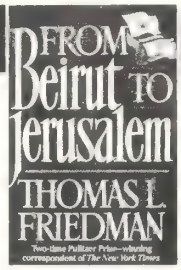
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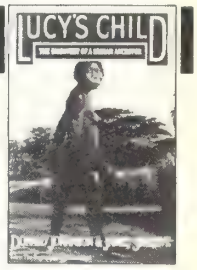
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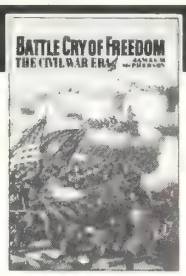
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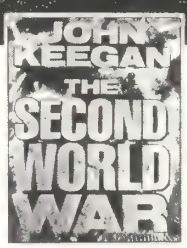
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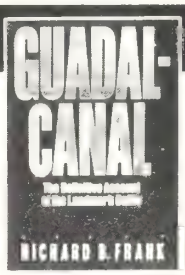
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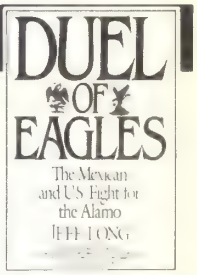
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[Q & A]

JUSTICE BRENNAN: THE TRUTH BE TOLD

From the October 21, 1990, Personality Parade, a regular column of readers' questions in Parade *magazine, a weekly. Walter Scott, a* Parade *writer, provides the answers.*

Q: Now that William Brennan has resigned from the U.S. Supreme Court, may we know the true relationship between him and the late Hollywood star Walter Brennan? From the photos I've seen there certainly is a strong resemblance.





—Winston D. Holt, Torrance, California

A: William Brennan, eighty-four, is not related to actor Walter Brennan, who died in 1974 after winning three Oscars for his supporting roles in *Come and Get It* (1936), *Kentucky* (1938), and *The Westerner* (1940).

[Dissenting Opinion]

DISPATCH THE SYSTEM, NOT THE MAN

From the dissenting opinion of Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall in the Court's decision to deny a stay of execution for Wilbert Evans, a death row inmate in Virginia. In 1984 a jury convicted Evans of murder and sentenced him to death on the ground that he represented a "future danger to society," one of the two possible grounds for applying the death penalty under Virginia law. After evidence of Evans's role in quelling a 1984 prison riot came to light, the District Court in Richmond last October granted a stay of execution; the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals then lifted the stay. One day later, on October 17, the Supreme Court upheld the Fourth Circuit's decision; Marshall was the only member of the Court to publish a dissent. At eleven P.M. that night, after Governor Douglas Wilder refused to intervene, Evans was put to death in the electric chair.

This Court's approval of the death penalty has turned on the premise that given sufficient procedural safeguards, the death penalty may be administered fairly and reliably. Wilbert Evans's plea to be spared from execution demonstrates the fallacy of this assumption. Notwithstanding the panoply of procedural protections afforded Evans by this Court's capital jurisprudence, Evans today faces an imminent execution that even the State of Virginia [now] appears to concede is indefensible. Because an execution under these circumstances highlights the inherently cruel and unusual character of capital punishment, I dissent.

Evans was convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death. At the sentencing phase, the jury's verdict was predicated on a *single* aggravating circumstance: that if allowed to live Evans would pose a serious threat of future danger to society. Without this finding Evans could not have been sentenced to death.

While Evans was on death row at the Mecklenberg Correctional Facility, an event occurred that casts grave doubt on the jury's prediction of Evans's future dangerousness. On May 31, 1984, six death row inmates at Mecklenberg attempted to engineer an escape. (Prison officials attest that Evans played no role in instigating the riot.) Armed with makeshift knives, these inmates took hostage twelve prison guards and two female nurses. The guards were stripped of their clothes and weapons, bound, and blindfolded. The nurses also were stripped of their clothes, and one was bound to an inmate's bed.

According to uncontested affidavits presented by guards taken hostage during the uprising, Evans took decisive steps to calm the riot, saving the lives of several hostages and preventing the rape of one of the nurses. For instance, Officer Ricardo Holmes, who was bound by escaping inmates and forced into a closet with other hostages, states that he heard Evans imploring the escaping inmates, "Don't hurt anybody and everything will be all right." Officer Holmes continues:

> It was very clear to me that [Evans] was trying to keep [the escaping inmates] calm and prevent them from getting out of control. It is my belief that had it not been for Evans, I might not be here today.

Other guards taken hostage during the uprising verify Officer Holmes's judgment that Evans protected them and the other hostages from danger. According to Officer Prince Thomas, Evans interceded to prevent the rape of Nurse Ethel Barksdale. Officers Holmes, Thomas, and Crutchfield and five other prison officials all attest that Evans's conduct during the May 31, 1984, uprising was consistent with his exemplary behavior during his close to ten years on death row.

Remarkably, the State of Virginia's opposition to Evans's application to stay the execution

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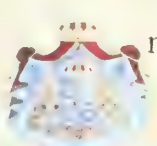
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barely contests Evans's depiction of the relevant events or Evans's conclusion that these events reveal the clear error of the jury's prediction of Evans's future dangerousness. In other words, the State concedes that the sole basis for Evans's death sentence—[illegible]—in fact *does not exist*.

The only ground asserted by the State for permitting Evans's execution to go forward is its interest in procedural finality. According to the State, permitting a death row inmate to challenge a finding of future dangerousness by reference to facts occurring after the sentence will unleash an endless stream of litigation. Each instance of an inmate's post-sentencing nonviolent conduct, the State argues, will form the basis of a new attack upon a jury's finding of future dangerousness, and with each new claim will come appeals and collateral attacks. By denying Evans's application for a stay, the Court implicitly endorses the State's conclusion that it is entitled to look the other way when late-arriving evidence upsets its determination that a particular defendant can lawfully be executed.

In my view, the Court's decision to let Wilbert Evans be put to death is a compelling statement of the failure of this Court's capital jurisprudence. This Court's approach since *Gregg* v. *Georgia* has blithely assumed that strict procedures will satisfy the dictates of the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment. As Wilbert Evans's claim makes crystal clear, even the most exacting procedures are fallible. Just as the jury occasionally "gets it wrong" about whether a defendant charged with murder is innocent or guilty, so too can the jury "get it wrong" about whether a defendant convicted of murder is deserving of death, notwithstanding the exacting procedures imposed by the Eighth Amendment. The only difference between Wilbert Evans's case and that of many other capital defendants is that the defect in Evans's sentence has been made unmistakably clear for us even before his execution is to be carried out.

The State's interest in "finality" is no answer to this flaw in the capital-sentencing system. It may indeed be the case that a state cannot realistically accommodate post-sentencing evidence casting doubt on a jury's finding of future dangerousness; but it hardly follows from this that it is *Wilbert Evans* who should bear the burden of this procedural limitation. In other words, if it is impossible to construct a system capable of accommodating *all* evidence relevant to a man's entitlement to be spared death—no matter when that evidence is disclosed—then it is the *system*, not the life of the man sentenced to death, that should be dispatched.

The indifferent shrug of the shoulders with which the Court answers the failure of its procedures in this case reveals the utter bankruptcy of its notion that a system of capital punishment can coexist with the Eighth Amendment. A death sentence that is *dead wrong* is no less so simply because its deficiency is not uncovered until the eleventh hour. A system of capital punishment that would permit Wilbert Evans's execution, notwithstanding as-to-now unrefuted evidence showing that death is an improper sentence, is a system that cannot stand.

I would stay Wilbert Evans's execution.

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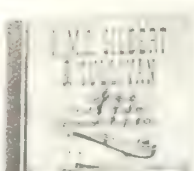


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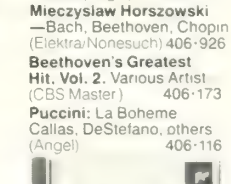
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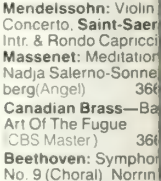
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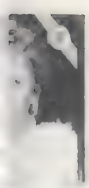
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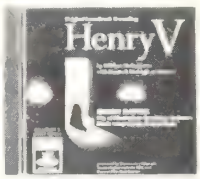
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[Non-tract]

SCREECHING TO THE CONVERTED

From "Dear Believer," a "non-tract" published by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, of Madison, Wisconsin. In 1989 Indiana governor Evan Bayh, in response to criticism from civil-liberties groups over the presence of Gideon Bibles in inn rooms in Indiana's state parks, decided to accept written material for the rooms from any religious group. Last October, following a request by the foundation, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources agreed to place "Dear Believer" in the rooms, and the foundation sent 500 copies of the pamphlet to the department. Bayh later directed that the pamphlets be removed, on the ground that the foundation was not a religious group.

Dear Believer,

You ask me to consider Christianity as the answer for my life. I have done that. I consider it untrue, repugnant, and harmful.

I find it incredible that you ask me to believe that: The earth was created in six literal days; women come from a man's rib; a snake, a donkey, and a burning bush spoke human language; all animal species, millions of them, rode on one boat; a detached hand floated in the air and wrote on a wall; Jesus walked on water unaided; fish and bread magically multiplied to feed the hungry; water instantly turned into wine; a fiery lake of eternal torment awaits unbelievers under the earth while there is life after death in a city that is 1,500 miles cubed, with mansions and food, *for Christians only*.

If you believe these stories, then you are the one with the problem, not me. These myths violate natural law, contradict science, and fail to correspond to reality or logic. If you can't see that, then you can't separate truth from fantasy. It doesn't matter how many people accept the delusions inflicted by "holy" men; a widely held lie is still a lie.

If Christianity were simply untrue, I would not be too concerned. Santa is untrue, but it is a harmless myth that people outgrow. But Christianity, besides being false, is also abhorrent. It amazes me that you claim to love the God of the Bible, a hateful, arrogant, sexist, cruel being who can't tolerate criticism. I would not want to live in the same neighborhood as such a creature!

The biblical God is a macho male warrior. Though he said "Thou shalt not kill," he ordered death for all opposition. He punishes offspring to the fourth generation; ordered pregnant women and children to be ripped up; is partial to one race of people; judges women inferior to men; is a sadist who created a hell to torture unbelievers; created evil; spread dung on people's faces; sent bears to devour forty-two children who teased a prophet; punishes people with snakes, dogs, dragons, swords, axes, fire, famine, and infanticide; and said fathers should eat their sons. Is that nice? Would *you* want to live next door to such a person?

And Jesus is a chip off the old block. He said, "I and my father are one," and he upheld "every jot and tittle" of the Old Testament law. He preached the same old judgment: vengeance and death, wrath and distress, hell and torture for all nonconformists. He never denounced the subjugation of slaves or women. He irrationally cursed and withered a fig tree for being barren out of season. He mandated burning unbelievers. (The Church has complied with relish.) He stole a horse. You want me to accept Jesus, but I think I'll pick my own friends, thank you.

I also find Christianity to be morally repugnant. The concepts of original sin, depravity, substitutionary forgiveness, intolerance, eternal punishment, and humble worship are all beneath the dignity of intelligent human beings.

[Interview]

LUTHER CAMPBELL DRAWS THE LINE

From an interview with Luther Campbell, the lead singer of the rap group 2 Live Crew, in the September 1990 issue of Crossroads Magazine, *published in New York City. Campbell was acquitted on obscenity charges by a Fort Lauderdale, Florida, jury last October. 2 Live Crew's most recent album,* Banned in the U.S.A., *was released last summer. The interview was conducted by Jesse Nash.*

CROSSROADS: Talk about some of the songs on the new album.

CAMPBELL: We've got a record called "Face Down, Ass Up, That's the Way We Like to Fuck." Don't everybody like it that way?

CROSSROADS: Is there any work of art you would characterize as obscene?

CAMPBELL: When people start cutting heads off of bodies and having sex with corpses, I find that shit obscene. That's in a lot of music. But if you're into it, then that's your thing. That's the reason we live in America.

Brilliant deduction.

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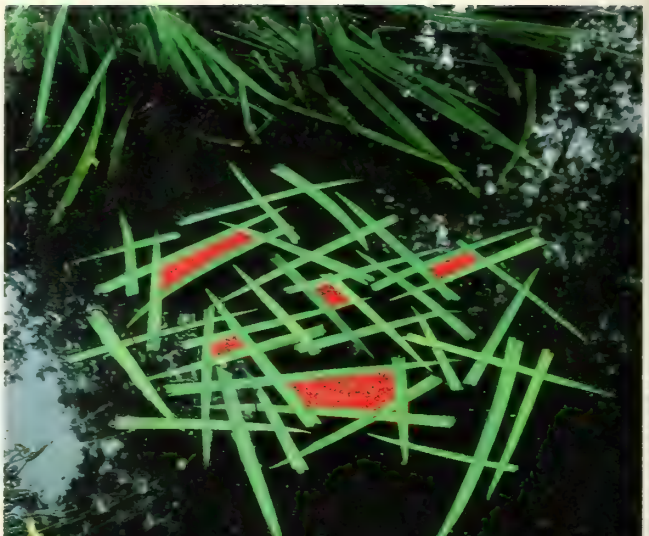
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COURTESY FABIAN CARSON GALLERY, TOKYO

From a collection of environmental sculptures by Andy Goldsworthy, a Scottish artist. Using only natural materials, Goldsworthy rearranges or alters the existing landscape and then photographs it. Above, at left, rowan leaves have been arranged around a hole; at right, iris leaves have been pinned together with thorns and laid on the surface of a pond along with rowanberries. Goldsworthy's photographs will be shown at the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain in Toulouse, France, from February 15 to April 7, and are collected in a book published by Harry N. Abrams.

They are barbaric ideas for primitive cultures cowering in fear and ignorance.

Do you see why I do not respect the biblical message? It is an insulting bag of nonsense. You have every right to torment yourself with such insanity—but *leave me out of it.* I have better things to do with my life.

[Essay]

KNOW THAT WHAT YOU EAT YOU ARE

From "The Pleasures of Eating," by Wendell Berry, in Our Sustainable Table, *a volume of essays edited by Robert Clark and published by North Point Press in Berkeley, California. Clark is the editor of* American Wine & Food *magazine. Berry's most recent book is a collection of essays entitled* What Are People For?

Many times, after I have finished a lecture on the decline of American farming and rural life, someone in the audience has asked, "What can city people do?"

"Eat responsibly," I have usually answered. Of course, I have tried to explain what I meant, but afterward I have invariably felt that there was more to be said than I had been able to say. Now I would like to attempt a better explanation.

I begin with the proposition that eating is an agricultural act. Eating ends the annual drama of the food economy that begins with planting and birth. Most eaters, however, are no longer aware that this is true. They think of food as an agricultural product perhaps, but they do not think of themselves as participants in agriculture. They think of themselves as "consumers."

Most urban shoppers would tell you that food is produced on farms. But most of them do not know on what farms, or what kinds of farms, or where the farms are, or what knowledge and skills are involved in farming. For them, then, food is pretty much an abstract idea—something they do not know or imagine—until it appears on the grocery shelf or on the table. Indeed, this sort of consumption may be said to be one of the chief goals of industrial production. The food industrialists have by now persuaded millions of consumers to prefer food that is already prepared. They will grow, deliver, and cook your food for you, and (just like your mother) beg you to eat it. That they do not yet offer to insert it, prechewed, into your mouth is only because they have found no profitable way to do so.

The industrial eater is one who no longer knows that eating is an agricultural act, who no longer knows or imagines the connections between eating and the land, and who is therefore necessarily passive and uncritical—in short, a victim. When food, in the minds of eaters, is no longer associated with farming and with the land, then the eaters are suffering from a kind of cultural amnesia that is misleading and dangerous.

There is a politics of food that, like any politics, involves our freedom. We still (sometimes) remember that we cannot be free if our minds and voices are controlled by someone else. But we have neglected to understand that neither can we be free if our food and its sources are controlled by someone else. The condition of the passive consumer of food is not a democratic condition. One reason to eat responsibly is to live free.

But if there is a food politics, there are also a food aesthetics and a food ethics, neither of which is dissociated from politics. The passive American consumer, sitting down to a meal of preprepared or fast food, confronts a platter covered with inert, anonymous substances that have been processed, dyed, breaded, sauced, gravied, ground, pulped, strained, blended, prettified, and sanitized beyond resemblance to any part of any creature that ever lived. The products of nature and agriculture have been made, to all appearances, the products of industry. Both eater and eaten are thus in exile from biological reality. And the result is a kind of solitude, unprecedented in human experience, in which the eater may think of eating as, first, a purely commercial transaction between him and a supplier, and then as a purely appetitive transaction between him and his food.

This peculiar specialization of the act of eating is of obvious benefit to the food industry, which has good reason to obscure the connection between food and farming. It would not do for the consumer to know that the hamburger she is eating came from a steer that spent much of its life standing deep in its own excrement in a feedlot, helping to pollute the local streams, or that the calf that yielded the veal cutlet on her plate spent its life in a box in which it did not have enough room to turn around. And though her sympathy for the coleslaw might be less tender, she should not be encouraged to meditate on the hygienic and biological implications of mile-square fields of cabbage, for vegetables grown in huge monocultures are dependent on toxic chemicals just as animals in close confinement are dependent on antibiotics and other drugs.

The consumer, that is to say, must be kept from discovering that in the food industry—as in any other industry—the overriding concerns are not quality and health but volume and price. For decades now the entire industrial food economy has relentlessly increased scale in order to increase volume in order (presumably) to reduce costs. But as scale increases, diversity declines; as diversity declines, so does health; as health declines, the dependence on drugs and chemicals necessarily increases. Machines, drugs, and chemicals are substituted for human workers and for the natural health and fertility of the soil. The food is produced by any means or any shortcuts that will increase profits. And the business of the cosmeticians of advertising persuades the consumer that food so produced is good, tasty, healthful, and a guarantee of marital fidelity and long life.

How does one escape this trap? Only voluntarily, the same way that one went in—by restoring one's consciousness of what is involved in eating, by reclaiming responsibility for one's own part in the food economy. Eaters, that is, must understand that eating takes place inescapably in the world, that it is inescapably an agricultural act, and that how we eat determines, to a considerable extent, the way the world is used.

What can one do? Here is a list, probably not definitive:

☐ Participate in food production to the extent that you can. If you have a yard or even just a porch box or a pot in a sunny window, grow something to eat in it. Make a little compost of your kitchen scraps, and become acquainted with the energy cycle that revolves from soil to seed to flower to fruit to food to offal to decay, and around again. You will be fully responsible for any food that you grow for yourself, and you will know all about it. You will appreciate it fully, having known it all its life.

☐ Prepare your own food. This means reviving in your own mind and life the arts of kitchen and household. This should both enable you to eat more cheaply and, since you will have some reliable knowledge of what has been added to the food you eat, give you a measure of "quality control."

☐ Learn the origins of the food you buy, and buy the food that is produced closest to your home. The idea that every locality should be, as much as possible, the source of its own food makes several kinds of sense. The locally produced food supply is the most secure, the freshest, and the easiest for local consumers to know about and to influence.

☐ Whenever you can, deal directly with a local farmer, gardener, or orchardist. By such dealing you eliminate the whole pack of merchants, transporters, processors, packagers, and adver-

users will thrive at the expense of both producers and consumers.

☐ Learn, in self-defense, as much as you can about the economy and technology of industrial food production. What is added to food that is not food, and what do you pay for these additions?

☐ Learn what is involved in the *best* farming and gardening.

☐ Learn as much as you can, by direct observation and experience if possible, of the life histories of the animals and plants that you eat.

The last suggestion seems particularly important to me. Many people are now as much estranged from the lives of domestic plants and animals (except for flowers and dogs and cats) as they are from the lives of the wild ones. This is regrettable, for these domestic creatures are in diverse ways attractive; there is much pleasure in knowing them. And at their best, farming, animal husbandry, horticulture, and gardening are complex and comely arts; there is much pleasure in knowing them too.

And it follows that there is great displeasure in knowing about a food economy that degrades and abuses those arts and those plants and animals and the soil from which they come. Though I am by no means a vegetarian, I dislike the thought that some animal has been made miserable in order to feed me. If I am going to eat meat, I want it to be from an animal that has lived a pleasant, uncrowded life outdoors, on bountiful pasture, with good water nearby and trees for shade. And I am getting almost as fussy about food plants. I like to eat vegetables and fruits that I know have lived happily and healthily in good soil—not the products of the lifeless, be-chemicaled factory-fields that I have seen, for example, in the Central Valley of California. The industrial farm is said to have been patterned on the factory production line. In practice, it invariably looks more like a concentration camp than a farm.

The pleasure of eating should be an extensive pleasure, not that of the mere gourmet. A significant part of the pleasure of eating is in one's accurate consciousness of the lives and the world from which food comes. And this pleasure, I think, is pretty fully available to the urban consumer who will make the necessary effort.

I mentioned earlier the politics, aesthetics, and ethics of food. But to speak of the pleasure of eating is to go beyond those categories. Eating with the fullest pleasure—pleasure, that is, that does not depend on ignorance—is perhaps the profoundest enactment of our connection with the world. In this pleasure we experience and celebrate our dependence and our gratitude, for we are living from creatures we did not make and powers we cannot comprehend; we are living from mystery. When I think of the meaning of food, I always remember these lines by the poet William Carlos Williams, which seem to me merely honest:

> There is nothing to eat,
> seek it where you will,
> but the body of the Lord.
> The blessed plants
> and the sea, yield it
> to the imagination
> intact.



From the Chicago Reader

[Recipes]

BAKING SODA

From "Cooking with Coca-Cola," a collection of recipes using Coca-Cola, distributed by Coke's Consumer Information Center in Atlanta. The pamphlet, which can be ordered by calling 1-800-GET-COKE, suggests that "to reduce foam so that the Coca-Cola can be accurately measured," the chef should "stir rapidly."

[illegible]

A piquant, fluffy cheese dip for raw vegetables, a spread for cocktail breads or crackers, or even a sandwich filling.

About ¾ pound (12 ounces) sharp cheddar cheese
1 package (4 ounces) Roquefort cheese

1 clove garlic
½ cup Coca-Cola
2 tablespoons soft margarine
1 tablespoon grated onion
1½ teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon dry mustard
¾ tablespoon salt
⅛ teaspoon Tabasco

Grate cheddar cheese into large mixing bowl. Add crumbled Roquefort. Put garlic through a press, add to cheeses with ¼ cup of the Coca-Cola and remaining ingredients. Beat with electric mixer on low speed until blended. Gradually add remaining Coca-Cola, then beat on high speed until mixture is fairly smooth, light, and fluffy. Pack into covered container. Chill. Best if refrigerated overnight. This keeps very well for a week or more.

SOUTHERN BELLE SALAD

A delicious, rich salad. The old-time favorite for a ladies luncheon.

1 can (16 ounces) pitted dark sweet cherries
1 package (3 ounces) cherry gelatin
1 cup Coca-Cola
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 package (3 ounces) cream cheese
½ cup cut-up pecans or walnuts

Drain cherry juice. Bring ¾ cup of the juice to boiling; add to gelatin. Stir until dissolved. Stir in Coca-Cola and lemon juice. Chill until gelatin mounds slightly. Cut cheese into very small pieces. Fold cheese, nuts, and whole cherries into gelatin. Spoon into seven individual molds. Chill until firm.

FRUITED PORK CHOPS

These glazed fruit-topped chops make a great Sunday dinner.

4 rib, loin, or shoulder pork chops
1 teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper
⅛ teaspoon ground ginger
1 medium apple
1 medium lemon or orange
2 tablespoons brown sugar
½ cup Coca-Cola
1 tablespoon corn starch

Trim fat from chops, then brown them on each side in an ungreased skillet. Lay chops in shallow baking pan. Do not overlap. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and ginger. Core unpeeled apple; cut crosswise into four thick slices. Cut lemon or orange into four slices; remove seeds. Lay slices atop apple slices. Place on each chop. Sprinkle with brown sugar. Pour Coca-Cola around chops. Cover tightly. Bake in moderate oven, 350 degrees, for forty-five minutes. Blend corn starch and 2 tablespoons water until smooth. Stir into meat juices. Bake, uncovered, fifteen minutes, or until meat is fork-tender. Spoon sauce over fruit chops to glaze.

[Talking Points]

SLY STALLONE, EXPRESSIONIST

From notes prepared for the Hanson Art Galleries to help their staff explain and promote Sylvester Stallone's paintings. Hanson, the Beverly Hills gallery that represents Stallone, held an exhibit of the actor's work last September. All forty paintings were sold, at prices ranging from $4,000 to $40,000.

Sylvester Stallone: Painter

The heart and soul of a painter are never far from his own creations. In these paintings, Sylvester Stallone's heart and soul blaze onto the canvas in gestures of bold and honest expression.

For more than twenty years Stallone has been painting spontaneously to release anxiety and frustration. The works have an electric charge, with dashes of loud color and moving figures united in vigorous brushwork. Stallone's style is free-form and poetic and relies on the transcendental language of emotion.

Drawn to his painting studio late at night, Stallone ignites his creativity into action. Using slashing erratic strokes of the brush, Stallone compares his painting activity to fencing. After squeezing paint directly onto the canvas, he manipulates the pigments with a large palette knife. Stallone uses a variety of techniques to create special effects, sometimes using spray paint to create "graffiti"—words or phrases that create layers of meaning.

Stallone always includes a generic clock or watch in his painting, creating a special tension with the placement of the hands. For Stallone time is the most important element of our life. Time well spent is hard to accomplish, while time lost is a tragedy. This is especially true in Hollywood, which manufactures heroes whose artificial existence may or may not survive the test of time.

Sylvester Stallone approaches painting like filmmaking, without heavily preconceived ideas. He is open to change, to reediting, to moving ideas and colors around. His urgent need to paint is a way of "freeze-framing" life in order to capture its essence. "Before I did

[Chart]

ACTS OF CONTRITION?

From "Polluters' PBS Penance," by Peter Dykstra, in the May/June 1990 issue of Extra!, published by Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting, a New York City–based media-watch organization. Dykstra, the media director for Greenpeace, researched the environmental record of corporations that have underwritten nature programs on public television.

Company	*Crime*	*Penance*
BASF	One of Western Europe's most energetic toxic dumpers	*Adventure*
Du Pont	Major chemical polluter; world's largest producer of ozone-eating CFCs	*Discoveries Underwater*
Georgia-Pacific	Clear-cut timberer and paper-mill polluter	*Forever Wild*
Goodyear	Petrochemical polluter; operated problem-plagued uranium-enrichment plants	*The California Condor*
W. R. Grace	Operated a landfill linked to high cancer and leukemia rates in Woburn, Massachusetts	*Victory Garden*
Hoffmann-La Roche	Showered Seveso, Italy, with dioxin-tainted chemicals	*The Health Century*
IBM	Major user of CFCs; responsible for groundwater contamination of Silicon Valley and elsewhere	*Planet Earth*
Mobil	Major petrochemical polluter; facing legal action in six states for claiming to produce "degradable" garbage bags	*The Living Planet*
Siemens	Major polluter based in Germany	*Nature*
Waste Management	Most penalized hazardous-waste company in EPA history	*Conserving America; Only One Earth*

Rocky," Stallone says, "I got the image on canvas and tried to live up to it. It's a way of somehow coming to terms with the characters—a guideline on how to play them."

Notes From [Art Historian] Roxanne Reep

Art vocabulary (form, content, subject):

Form is the end product of the organization of all of the elements of design in a given work of art.

Content, the source of which is *form*, is the expressive meaning of the *form*. The artist uses the elements of design as a kind of formal language to bring content to his work.

Subject is the theme represented in a work. Artworks may or may not have subject matter represented. Generally when subject matter is included in a composition it contributes to the content of that work.

Points of Discussion

Stallone and the Hollywood hero.

Painting as a release of emotional energy.

History of expressionism in painting: German expressionism.

Surrealism: Is different from Stallone.

The surrealist edge of the painted element is more defined and controlled. The Stallone edge is more like that of the abstract expressionist and the German expressionist. In the automatic-writing concept of surrealism, the artist writes or makes marks while in a dream state or a relaxed state of mind (eyes shut at times); i.e., see similarity of the random nature of the Stallone markings that are all over canvas.

Political commentary in Stallone's work.

Symbolism of clock in Stallone's work.

Descriptions of Work

W.C. at 10:00

— Color is used emotionally and purposefully to level and develop the many stages of time apparent in the working process of creation.

— The color and application of paint is reminiscent of German expressionists.

— Disregard for purposeful distortion of the figure is common to German expressionists, abstract expressionists (de Kooning), and now Stallone.

— Energetic mark quality is also grounded in action painting (Pollock).

Lay It As It Plays
— The compressed color is a richly developed geometric tension between red, yellow, and blue.
— The use of primary colors with black is German expressionist in origin.
— The contour nature of the figure is reminiscent of Matisse's female figures.

Rudy at Nine
— Reveals graffiti-like symbols floating around a figure that is overlapped and diffused by a white centralized rectangle, edged in blue.
— Recalls the dadaist practice of deleting elements of their paintings with white.
— Strong painterly edges are noted at this junction of white and blue reminiscent of abstract expressionists (Rothko and de Kooning).
— Floating symbols, letters, words, and colors have leanings toward graffiti and pop art/abstract expressionism (Jasper Johns's pure, deliberate use of color).

[Story]

STAGE KISS

By Martin Crimp. From the July 26, 1990, issue of the London Review of Books. *Crimp is a playwright who lives in London. His play* No One Sees the Video *opened last November at London's Royal Court Theatre.*

What kind of actor? Well, let's just say you'd almost certainly know my face but might not know my name. One evening, for example, on the way home from a performance (I'm walking back to my flat), a young man stops me. He's wearing the kind of hat whose earflaps fasten at the crown. He blocks my path. I don't know your name, he says, but I saw the show and I've been thinking about it. Tell me, he says, that moment, that moment when you kiss the girl, is your tongue in her mouth? And what about hers? What does she do with hers?

From time to time after the show I meet up with our director. The two of us go to a kind of café, or club, I suppose you'd call it, popular with people in the business—the Safety Curtain. This club (cozy despite its terrible name) has mirrors along the walls. One night our director looks into the mirror beside him. He starts to make faces and pull at his skin. It's quite alarming the way he's pulling the loose skin of his cheeks right down. Fuck, he says. Fuck. Is that what I look like? Is that really what I look like? I have to laugh. He's raised his voice. It's a little embarrassing.

Outside the theater, signs hang by chains from the canopy. They say things like

MAGNIFICENT

or:

HUGELY ENTERTAINING

We've collected a whole row of them, and they remind me of railway stations or hospitals. Like the line for tickets, they continue round the side of the building. As you make your way to the stage door you pass beneath one that says:

TWO SUBTLY EROTIC
PERFORMANCES

I know he's in love with Clair, but this is embarrassing. I say to him: Keep your voice down. *You* don't need reassuring. It's *us*, the actors, who are the vulnerable ones. Vulnerable. He doesn't believe that for a moment. He's not prepared to be deceived, and that makes him intolerable. I want nothing to do with this, and I tell him so.

These feelings are at their most destructive when they interfere with the work. For example, he always refused—although, of course, in a roundabout way—to rehearse the kiss. And when we did finally pin him down, all he would say was: Go for it. We're standing in the middle of the rehearsal room, talking very quietly, intimately, his arms around us. Clair catches my eye. She finds this physical contact repellent, that's obvious. She's biting her lip, trying not to laugh. He can't see that. He's bowed his head between us. It's hanging there. For a moment it's as if he's lifeless and we're holding up a



From the San Francisco Chronicle.

B

[Poem]

CARGO CULT OF THE SOLSTICE AT HADRIAN'S WALL

By George Starbuck. From Grand Street, *No. 30, a quarterly published in New York City. Starbuck, the author of eight books of poetry, lives in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.*

)TinyBombOTiny	ItEldAcquaints	OCheerfulnessO
BombWhatGangOf	TheElderlyWith	WholesomenessO
MadmenMadeThee	Frailty&Terror	AmityONiceness
)Middleeastern	ThePresidentOf	OIntoInHisGrip
MasterpieceNoT	MegabucksFinds	AttainingRegal
NTBetrayedThee	Payable2Bearer	Impreciseness*
)EensieWeensie	LiningsInLifes	HeTakesTheCake
ndyCarOCreamy	Overcoats&Anti	ForKindnessYet
HalvahCandyBar	DagoAnecdotes&	290PersiansGet
SeeEvenMrMovie	SummersBunchOf	NotOneSpasmNot
StarMakesFaces	HadjiiotesJust	OneWetTremorOf
ToDissuadeThee	HaddaBeAnError	Thinktwiceness

* This form is recommended for beginners. It is as simple as it looks. Fourteen characters to a line. Difficulty arises only when a footnote is required. Then the poet must contrive a thirteen-character line in place of the canonical fourteener, so as to leave room for the asterisk. Most poems in the form evade the difficulty by doing without footnotes, save for poems like this, which are designed to be put in textbooks.

car stands just outside the gate, in the moonlight. The last thing my wife says to me is, Are you happy? To which I reply, Are you? In the theater, these lines could prove unplayable, and I'd suggest a cut.

The moment of the kiss is violent, technical, prolonged. Clair's character initiates it. I'm playing the kind of part I often seem to be offered nowadays: the older man—solitary, apparently cold—but with an undercurrent of repressed sensuality. And as Clair—or Clair's character—pulls me down onto the chaise, we must avoid (a) letting the audience up front see all the way up her dress (slippery green satin) and (b) crushing her (I've recently started to put on weight). At the same time, as I've said, it must be forceful and abandoned, and I think we've started to achieve that. By pushing one of my knees up between her legs as I fall, we solve the weight-bearing and sightline problems simultaneously, as well as making it quite clear that sexual intercourse will follow. Even without direction, the kiss at its best can still contain the truth of all the kisses I've known: the kisses of the girl who became "my wife" and lives by the sea, the frightening kisses that came outside my marriage and—notoriously—destroyed it, other kisses onstage, kisses on film. How can I regret any of these when each contributes to the work and feeds the intensity of this one stage kiss that night after night shocks a packed house into what the critics quite rightly describe as rapture?

Sometimes, though, just before our lips touch, I'm afraid I can't resist whispering one of my little comments, the joy being Clair's extreme susceptibility. Just the movement of an eyebrow is often enough to set her off. As I go down I push my knee into the usual place, but from the way her fingertips dig into me I can tell she's lost all control. This is why she's so desperate for my mouth to cover hers. It's a scream. Her back arches. She's choking. We kiss.

In the auditorium: silence, rapture, the same, exactly the same. No inkling of deceit. ■

PASSING VIEWS

On a transcontinental train, looking for America

By Edward Hoagland

Bound for California, I recalled that my first memory is of a train—a wreck of the Great Northern's *Empire Builder* in North Dakota, to be precise, when the tracks slid apart in a rainstorm and our Pullmans tipped over. A farmer with a hay wagon took Mother and me (age two and a half) and other "women and children" toward the distant kerosene lamps of a little station.

My parents and grandparents lived on opposite coasts, so I was privileged to have yearly round trips between New York and Seattle before World War II, and on the *Chief* or *Super Chief* to Los Angeles afterward. In those upper berths I enjoyed my earliest privacy, when I zipped myself exultantly in behind the heavy green curtains or whiled away the long days watching for grain elevators, Indian reservations, cowhands, white horses, and other emblematic sights of the great prairie states leading into the storied Rockies. If confirmed as being white and not gray, I got a penny apiece for those horses, but I wanted to skip nothing anyhow, and even amid the splendors of the dining car—starched tablecloths, tasty ham, sugary oatmeal, shining glassware, comfortable cocoa, silver forks and spoons—I could gaze out. The *Chief*, the *Empire Builder*, the *20th Century Limited*—traveling on these famous trains was inimitable.

I have also made the classic, five-day sail to Southampton and Cherbourg, with its sudden, deep, hothouse friendships, broken off on the dock but no less perfervid for that, just as one never forgets the sea's blue pitch and sway. A train trip the same distance, 3,000 miles, meant for me instead a constant zonal progression of scenery outdoors, the comprehensive change of milieu at the Midwest metropolis of Chicago, and hourly stops at smaller stations where strangers of every character and condition might swing aboard. The startling or poignant confidences a seatmate can lay on you on a long-distance train do not have the same trajectory as shipboard infatuations because you can't trust the other person even so far as to be there the following morning; he or she may simply vanish during the night. Nor have they the minimal point of reference of a passport vouching for their identity. For these reasons a midnight easing of the heart in a train's bar car might seem more chancy, though more comfy too, because it was with a regular fellow American, subject to American customs and laws.

When my father was a scholarship student going from Kansas City to Yale, he had had to work his way east on cattle trains, feeding and watering the beasts and shoveling their shit. Once, in middle Missouri, when he got off to relieve himself, he climbed the embankment of the roadbed again, to find the train gone, and walked miles to find a friendly section man, who put him onto a passing caboose. I've ridden in cabooses, too, and when I was a child, staring out of the cross-country Vistadome, every time the train stopped I knew that a potential new life lay there in front of me. Cows to milk, creeks to swim in—I had relatives in Ohio, Kansas, and Michigan, as well as in California and Washington, so the breadth of the journey wasn't intimidating. Every bump of the nation registered on me, which itself was a pleasure (we begin by bumping all over town in a womb),

Edward Hoagland's most recent book is Heart's Desire, *a collection of his essays, a number of which originally appeared in* Harper's Magazine.



d the conversations adults deigned to direct
y way hadn't the abrupt, fragmentary quality
talk on a plane. I could stroll about inside the
r, stretch my legs in the fresh air on a plat-
rm, or chug through a thunderstorm, feeling
e rain and the wind in my face, or be delayed
a nameless location en route by a break-
down without tumbling out of the
sky.

Moving between teaching jobs late last
arch, I caught a train—the *Lake Shore Limit-*
—in Albany, New York, with a conveniently
rge collection of luggage, headed for Sacra-
ento, another state capital, at 11 P.M. It was
at cozy hour when one is ready for bed, and I
d a bunk to look forward to. The platform was
stly with college kids going back after break.
irlfriends, boyfriends, uncles, and aunts make
a railway station more festive than your average airport, or a bus station's desperate motif, where you meet the halt and the lame, the homeless and on-the-lam.

"Hitting the lonesome trail?" my woman friend in Vermont had asked when I left, though I was coming back. And indeed train travel is that, without the fast-forward thrust of a jet engine in back of your seat throwing your thoughts ahead to your destination. Instead, you fussily settle in, the sweet-sour piquancy of your departure unmarred by emergency-escape rehearsals and the sensations of a sardine being catapulted into the clouds.

In a deliciously intricate matrix of sounds and motions, squeaks, soft shrieks, and swaying vibrations, we gathered speed. I had a friend once, about twelve years ago, who, lying in bed, would say to me: "Welcome aboard!" The es-

otograph by D. Durrance/Woodfin Camp

sence of life is to balance spontaneity with fidelity, and lickety-split, we began crossing upstate New York, as I sipped wine, reclining, drowsy. The scent of marijuana filled my sleeping car till Sheila, the Amtrak hostess—small, kind, correct, with a black bob to her hair—announced on the intercom that you couldn't do that. The train rocked and clicketed, blared and rumbled, in a manner encouraging only sleep.

I woke early, in Erie, Pennsylvania, a town that the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus train had carried me to in 1951, during another of the railroad-rich eras of my antique youth. We set up the big top next to the lake, as I recall, let the elephants bathe, and skinny-dipped ourselves, while some of the performers, as well as a crowd of towners, watched. Even us workhands became exhibitionists in such a daredevil atmosphere. The performers, including sideshow performers, traveled in roomettes like this one I was enjoying now, and my boss, the giraffe man (his neck wasn't elongated; he took care of the giraffes), who was the fat lady's lover, bunked domestically with her. But the rest of us (I was the monkey boy or cat man, depending on which animals I took care of) traveled two to a wooden bed, and with the beds stacked three high in the sleeping car, a space so very confined that if your bedmate was fat you needed to sleep with your arms over your head or sleep on your side; and the bunk above was immediately over your face.

EVERYBODY AT MY TABLE FELT REFLECTIVE, FULL OF THEIR SHOULD-HAVE-DONES, WHICH IN THESE 1990s ARE LIKELY TO CONCERN REAL ESTATE

Luxuriating in my *Lake Shore Limited* berth, I polished off last night's complimentary bottle of wine—this was, after all, a rest cure—while gazing at the reddish tinge of the budding trees in the chill rain outdoors. We were an hour late, which is not bad for Amtrak, and I walked through several rollicking coaches to the dining car for "Old Fashioned Railroad French Toast."

Everybody at my table felt leisurely, reflective, and wry, full of their should-have-dones, which in these 1990s are quite likely to concern real estate that should have been bought or perhaps sold or maybe held onto. Two men and a woman, they wanted it known that they had disposable income, that loose-schedule traveling like this was one of the perks of having made good, but that they weren't *prosperous*. All of us were experienced sizers-up, from interviewing or hiring other people, used to the flux of hometowns that aren't exactly hometowns anymore and businesses that cut, switch, and fold; and so the risky, risqué quality that trains were thought to have in my parents' and grandparents' day, and in the Gilded Age when riverboat gamblers, seducers, and swells moved onto trains, is gone. (I myself remember card sharks laying out an illicit blackjack or poker game in the men's lounge, next to the john, where the best conversations took place as well.)

Grifters, mashers—what innocence! The conductor was then a fatherly cop, a fount of philosophy, an ace at categorizing humankind. You knew you were getting old when the conductors got younger than you. And trains were so extraterritorial that black men could work rather cheerfully on them—with their own union, incredibly enough, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, established in 1925—joining with white people under a flag of truce, no lynch mob in the offing as long as they stayed on board. For a young woman like my mother, going back and forth between Vassar and Aberdeen, Washington, these waiters and porters were the only black people she ever spoke to.

West of Toledo, a sixty-eight-mile straight away gave us a chance to strut our speed. Six thousand horsepower, two engines, the fields brown as November, which March corresponds to. The *Lake Shore Limited* is fairly grubby, with "heritage" equipment, but the upbeat Sheila and my car's porter, Berie, a bespectacled schoolmasterly fellow with a sweet smile, proudly specified that they were "Chicago-based, not New York, and that it didn't always rain hard or look like one ass-end of town after another.

Chicago's Union Station, like New York's Grand Central Terminal, Union Station in Los Angeles, Union Station in Washington, and Union Station in Denver, still has grandeur. The *California Zephyr*, which would take me the rest of the way, pulled in on the next track just as we arrived, so I didn't have time for more sightseeing than a glimpse of the Sears Tower, "tallest in the world," as Sheila promised when we disembarked.

The new cars, "Superliners," are double-decker; most compartments are on top. You enter through a central sliding door and mount narrow circular stairs. The train had actual showers, which astounded me—trains come from the Saturday-night-is-bath-night era—and the toilets didn't immediately flush right down onto the tracks so that the local dogs could sniff our offal. The conductor and porter, both senior personalities to be assigned to the flagship train, were tactfully gauging everybody who entered for possible "whiners," muttering sagely as they consulted a printout. Cloyee, the porter, a brisk fireplug, originally a Burlington Northern man, had twenty-three years on the railroad. "But you want to get off those freight

trains in the winter," he told me. He, too, was Chicago-born.

The journey grew serious once we had left Chicago's extensive railroad yards and the badlands, wildlands, wastelands that surround them. Black-soil prairie began, with green farm machinery standing around every few miles. Unlike the Rust Belt, food is not an endeavor that goes into eclipse. On small farms or big farms, the mortgage may not get paid but the sun beats down and food grows. We slow travelers unclenched our nerves a bit more and talked of sisters we had in Syracuse or Salt Lake, crossing modest creek bottoms with curly cottonwoods between the vast soybean and corn fields all the while. The spaciousness out the window and the raucousness of the wheels loosened us. With 2,416 miles to go, we couldn't help but relax.

A bulldozer factory at Aurora; pig farms at Princeton; the Spoon River at Kewanee. Monmouth is where Wyatt Earp was born. Great-great-grandparents of mine spent the mid-nineteenth century in Bardolph, Illinois, as farm folks, and I, too, make much of my living from the out-of-doors in the sense that I write about it.

The dining-car waiters were vying with each other as to how wiped-out they were, how little sleep they had got, how many meals they had missed during their six days off. "Love and work. That's what it boils down to," I said to ours, who combed his hair into the highest Afro and was the gentlest with elderly white people who needed his help. Now busted free from loved ones, they were enjoying the mustardy part of life for a traveling man: the departure. I remembered the same giddy pleasure after fights at home years ago when my train cleared the Bronx's rail yards for New England. I mentioned to our waiter at one point how my father had once got left behind by a train.

"When this train starts to move, get out of the way, because I'm going to get on!" It was still no joke for a black man to get left behind.

Grain elevators had marked our progress and measured the decline of the sun. We crossed the Mississippi at dusk in a mist at Burlington, Iowa. Both shores with their froggy-looking marshes and the couple of islands in view had a shaggy aspect, as if Huck Finn and Jim could have rafted through here on the sly among the drift logs without being spotted.

Whether it's Mount Vesuvius, the Sphinx, or the Mississippi, whenever you look at an icon you receive a montage of the photos or more bookish imagery that you have absorbed ever since your teens; and like the Mississippi, railroads, too, losing 3,000 miles of track every year, are becoming like that.

"Bob doesn't fly," said a compact blond Floridian who frequently smoked in the vestibule. "Bob is the man I'm with." Standing, swaying, she would bend an ear to another Floridian, seventy-something, with a New Jersey accent, who told us about her household and financial arrangements with her son and daughter-in-law. In return, I volunteered the information that I earned about twenty dollars an hour from writing but that my surgeon had just earned a thousand dollars an hour for doing a job on me.

In the dining car the splendid dim scenery swept by perpetually. Mount Pleasant. Ottumwa. Other isolated constellations of lights, cattle pens, grain bins, houses, and shacks—"that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night," as *The Great Gatsby* ends.

Over baked halibut, I spoke with two New Yorkers who were leaving forever, uprooting in early middle age, a lesbian couple fleeing the megalopolis to find a new home. They were going to wander, loaf on their savings a few months, then settle near the older one's brother, who was equipped with a wife and children, a ranch house on a leafy street. She'd been a typist for nineteen years, a flying-fingers job with no retirement plan. The other woman was "in health care" and didn't mention the furnace of AIDS but the homeless delirium in the streets above which they had been living for umpteen years. They wanted neighbors with children, two-car garages, and flower gardens, "the American dream," as the younger one, who intended to learn to drive and trim a hedge, said.

The waiter's patter is half the production at these railroad meals. The menu of beef, fish, or fowl is succinct, the vegetables are fresh, the dessert is sweet; but I waited for the summary justice that is dispensed, vivid in my memories of *Empire Builder* trips. Sure enough, when a family of four took the next table and the two small kids climbed into their chairs, one reached immediately for the tip and grabbed three coins. His sister didn't.

"*That* one's going to be a Rockefeller. But that girl's going to wind up on welfare if she don't watch out. She don't pay no attention to money, does she? Don't want to pick it up."

My New York tablemates, getting up, asked the waiter if he would be certain to collect their tip or if the other man would.

"I'll break his fingers if he does."

Just so, fifty years ago, when I had misbehaved at the table and my mother asked the waiter what she ought to do—she generally appealed to the nearest witness for guidance, public humiliation being its own punishment—he picked up her steak knife and told me, "I'd cut your fingers off, young gentleman!"

When Harry Met Sally was shown on the lounge car's video. I have eye problems and couldn't see it and had missed more important things, but your mind's eye becomes your main eye anyhow. Osceola. Creston. The Iowa whistle-stops, as we raced through the dark, made me wistful, remembering two winters and springs when I lived in Iowa City very happily, in love with a gawkily willowy social worker who was intuitive, competent, much put-upon, as social workers do tend to be, who played the piano on Saturdays and Sundays, filled the house with flowers to last through the week, and took me out visiting Amish farmers and friends roundabout in that rolling lush country.

With age, we become responsible for what's in our heads—the character of the memories there, the music we are familiar with, the storehouse of books we have read, the people whom we can call, the scenery we know and love. Our memories become our dreams, and when your eyes go bad you find out what's there. You either recognize a towhee's song or not, know an indigo bunting's or a mourning dove's, and the wild geese going overhead. Rediscovering your nose, you lift food toward your nostrils to smell, as children do. I sometimes see what I want to see—an ice cream truck parked at the curb that isn't; the yellow bell of a jazz trumpet in a wheat field.



Before our *Zephyr* reached Omaha I fell asleep, lulled by the rockabye wheels and the tick-a-tick tracks.

We crossed the Nebraska-Colorado line in a snowstorm, with visibility a quarter mile. A lady who'd grown up on a milo and cattle farm in Kansas not far from here told me emphatically, "There's a reason why this is so empty!" She'd fled to Oregon years ago; had been visiting her sick mother and caught the train to unwind on the way home. No, she insisted when I asked, she didn't even like *The Wizard of Oz*, not Kansas even in that peppy guise.

Soldiers, college kids had their separate lingoes. Leaning in the aisle—the coaches a warzone scene of sprawled, sleeping bodies—they passed code words intended to mean I'm O.K., You're O.K. And a number of people wore Mona Lisa smiles, riding quietly encapsulated in thought.

But several gray-haired souls had ventured east to see ailing mothers or fathers and were publicly pensive. The future lay in the West, a plastics salesman said. "Pain, pain," he muttered, without plunging into particulars.

We were running two and a half hours late because of brake troubles and our having been shunted behind a 150-car freight, Cloyee said. The prairie looked ever more primal in the sleet storm. I peered outside, then into the washroom mirror because a police artist, interviewed in yesterday's Omaha paper, mentioned how people's ears fall, mouths droop, and necks jowl with age.

Sick parents were not as anxious a subject to talk about as trouble involving your children, however. I might hear in detail about arthritis or Alzheimer's disease, yet no more than a wince in reference to how worried the same person was on their daughter's behalf. But we also had couples going to Las Vegas for a blowoff.

"It lets it all out," said a tool-and-die man.

Jennie, his wife, with tousled blond hair but a face just as skeptical and short of sleep, who had joined him at the office when the kids grew up, said Vegas was a dependable blast. Three days of it and they'd fly home. "Three days does it, with the health club and all."

"The good old U.S.A. I love it," said another woman. She was in business also. "I'm a builder," she told me, with a direct, pretty smile. "L.A.–based."

As we floated through Fort Morgan like a bubble located in the middle sky, we saw a coyote scouting the feedlots. This was "the season when farmers pull calves," said my Kansas-raised friend who disliked *The Wizard of Oz*.

At Denver we had a chance to stroll the spacious old station. Tall benches, chalkboards, large ticket counters, a newspaper store, a coffee

Photograph by D. Durrance / Woodfin Camp

ıop. There were some cheeky Indian physiog-
›mies and bent cowpoke hats with seam-
itched visages underneath them, who, in the
›llering bustle, joined us in swinging aboard.
ne cowboy was bound for the proud redneck
›wn of Thompson, Utah, where loggers and
›zer-drivers have been beating up tree-huggers
tely in a dispute about land management. On
ıe platform he stubbed out a "coffin nail" and
t a toothpick into the cut of his mouth.

We also had trippers along for the five-hour
de up over the Rockies' Front Range to Glen-
ood Springs, to soak in the mineral pools over-
ight. Dianne and Bill Robie, from Golden,
ave done this many times, and once in 1964,
what was their best courtship adventure,
mped on a freight-train flatcar at the top of
ıe Continental Divide, hid themselves, and
›de through the six awesome miles of Moffat
unnel, on down to Denver. She works for the
hamber of Commerce and he for Coors beer.
e proved an enthusiastic guide for me as the
ephyr coiled slowly up the 2 percent grade,
ırough lovely slots and intimate notches that
ınfolded a string of one-minute glimpses of
iny, vertiginous, snowy, rock-framed scenery
between an erratic succession of twenty-nine
ınnels.

Dianne was quilting a pillow while Bill point-
d out wooden mining flumes, old wagon
acks, and Mount Evans and James Peak, both
f them over 13,000 feet high and partly hidden
y the snow squalls that reduced visibility. In
ıe middle of Moffat Tunnel, at 9,239 feet, I
lt the grade change. We'd crossed the Divide
nd tilted downward. Ten minutes of darkness,
ıen daylight, and the precarious hamlet of Fra-
r, "Icebox of America," composed of scattered
abins and prefabs, with a river of the same
ame, in its infancy, alongside. Loads of ducks
inged and flittered. Many geese grazed in the
›arse fields. Three eagles stood in the trees. We
aw several bands of deer. Spring flocks of small
irds in biblical numbers gleaned the thawed
round of bugs and seeds.

As we moved on, there were sudden, swift
istas of peaks and saddles, valleys like ham-
ıocks, passes like chutes, although at the towns
f Granby and Kremmling pleasing plateaus of
igh-up remoteness spread out into ranching
ountry. Then came more private spells of wild
errain, narrow gulches, secret ravines, twisty,
nd stirring for me. Fraser Canyon. Byers Can-
on. Gold rock or red rock whipsawed into pa-
oda shapes by the young Colorado River, with
hite rapids or roiling stretches often a molten
reen. Little river-bottom ranches relieved the
umultuous congruence of water and cliff occa-
ionally. Gore Canyon extended twenty-two
iles, with walls well over a thousand feet high,
the river corkscrewing in shortcuts that we couldn't take or simply tripping lightly down its stairsteps, carving intense, enviable pockets of meadow beside purling pools I'd like to go back to and camp at for a week.

Out of Gore Canyon we left the sweet companionship of trees. Sagebrush on yellow or red dry soil (though it was raining) took its place. Red Canyon is where the Colorado acquired its name, which means "red," and the vivid rocks were just as dramatic in shape. Glenwood Canyon, taller, browner, more bulky and gnarled, with precipitous walls and a swirling riverbed where you could drown, was scary if you cast your mind back to the early white men tiptoeing through here hoping not to meet Indians.

THERE WERE SUDDEN VISTAS OF PEAKS AND SADDLES, VALLEYS LIKE HAMMOCKS, PASSES LIKE CHUTES, ALL TWISTY AND STIRRING FOR ME

This sequence of canyons was the best part of my trip and the *Zephyr*'s midpoint to San Francisco Bay. The sun came out for its sunset between Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction, amid open spaces everywhere except for the ridgeline of mountains. Baxter Mountain. The Parachute Mountains. Grand Mesa.

In the dining car, we discovered that the headwaiter had seated three "Q.A. people" together—Quality Assurance; a checker, an inspector, and a supervisor—with me. Immediately the hierarchy asserted itself. The checker, a modest, somewhat stooped woman, had not finished high school. Anne, the supervisor, by contrast, had a master's degree in business administration, earned $50,000 a year, and oversaw sixty-three checkers and nine inspectors. She had a heady, push-ahead, gay sort of energy and, hearing that I was a teacher, told me with understandable resentment that she had been informed by an influential teacher in high school that she wasn't college material. I agreed teachers shouldn't play God.

Their pride in Q.A. work was evident. You might be inspecting potato chips, but it was sure crucial. The problem, as Anne told me, was not that humans were more fallible than machines. "That's the cliché, but the machinery fails more often than the humans do. Except I have a hell of a time convincing my bosses of that."

The inspector said yes. She was an Indiana woman of income, authority, and size midway between the slender checker and huskier Anne, and confided that she'd vowed to herself many years ago that she'd "see California before my sixtieth birthday" and, as good as her word, was going to do so—arrive on precisely that day.

about her family and family's fam- she had a veritable rootball of attachments count for the delay. Anne seemed much more alone in the world, as if maybe blowing her own horn to keep herself company. White-collar, blue-collar, "pink-collar": She'd witnessed it all. We chatted after supper, while *Licence to Kill* blared from the video screen and Utah's Ruby Canyon, Green River Valley, Price River Canyon, and Spanish Fork Canyon swept by unseen in the dark of the night.

A hungry childhood; a mastery of computer flow charts and how to "network" at a conference—now Anne had a constituency of admirers and pals, so that her boss had become alarmed and (her secretary had told her over the phone) was seizing upon her absence to go through her back file of faxes and, after demanding her computer codes, all of her discs, looking for anything that he could nail her on.



"I don't *want* his job. I don't know if *mine's* worth it!" she told me.

She loved her job; yet was it displacing the truer values? The only child of an only child, she was traveling in a compartment with her mother, who, they had just found out, was terminally sick. Her lung had collapsed as she was being examined for a breathing ailment, and they were on this train on doctor's orders lest the altitude shifts on a plane collapse the lung again. Who could take care of her? She lived three hours away from Anne, and what was the point of the fancy salary? You rack up a good performance chart as your mother dies? Shouldn't she throw over the supercharged job and move in with her? "There is a better way to live." This was a chicken-farm disease that cumulatively destroyed your lungs. "Ten hours a day walking through those chicken sheds breathing that dust, and never knew about it!" The ethics of business were not taught in school.

But she was buoyant also, full of curiosity and zest. We parted, and that night the train split, her five-car section veering from Salt Lake toward L.A., another five cars heading toward Oregon, and my seven going straight west.

By dawn, we were so late—about three hours—that Cloyee exclaimed that he scarcely remembered when he'd last seen the first town, Elko, Nevada, in daylight. "And on a sleeper you don't get much call for towns like him."

I'd been in Elko for *National Geographic* a couple of years before; and after hours one night the magazine's photographer had taken me to a whorehouse where a young lady had shown us the angel tattooed on one of her breasts. She told us she had never done this kind of thing until now. Her baby was lodged in his father's hands and her lawyer wanted his money up front. She rode "the Hound" to San Francisco to visit the boy but didn't work there because "the police have no sense of humor, you know?"

I'd believed her, she was so vulnerable looking and clear-skinned, but when I asked Cloyee if he would have, he shook his head.

No kids, but married, he sleeps or rests through the first three of his six days off, even if friends drop in. Wakes at 5:30 A.M., goes out for the paper, and reads it until he can sleep again. Then in and out of slumberland. Plum-colored, short, quick, with a quarter century of seniority, so the railroad will have to buy him out if it folds—and replete with turn-aside expertise in blunting white people's insults—Cloyee is probably a hard man to wrong. During the summer he pulls ranks and transfers himself to the *Empire Builder* on the more placid northern route.

In 1919 America had 265,000 miles of railroad track, lately cut to 150,000, and the flagship *Zephyr* runs on an anthology of famous lines: the Burlington Northern from Chicago to Denver; the Denver & Rio Grande Western, on to Salt Lake; the Union Pacific from Salt Lake City to Winnemucca, Nevada; and the Southern Pacific from Winnemucca west. Our sleeping cars were new million-dollar jobs, but the lounge car dated to the Santa Fe era of the 1950s, when kids used to go to the Grand Canyon that way. In the summer of 1941 I went and the complete experience—the all-day mule ride down the stunning South Wall, the red-rock tables and strata, the silence like nothing I'd ever heard, until we got to the roaring river at the bottom, in whose surge two deer were being whirled to their deaths—established a permanent awe and love for the West in me.

Also, when I went home, I wanted to be a trackwalker. The Pullman porter had pointed these people out to me, and back in suburban Connecticut, I discovered that our railroad spur off the New York-to-Boston line had a man whose job was to walk the roadbed regularly, looking for loose fishplates. Riding this "Toonerville Trolley," as we called it, I'd watch for him (my father did, too, still having a vagrant streak). He would show up eventually, a skinny fellow in a shabby jacket with a walking stick

Photograph by Doug Mazzapica/Black Star

hose face you would never see as the train
ıssed because he was always looking down. His
sk was to see if the rails hopped. Perhaps I read
to his attitude as well an impatience to have
be gone so that he could get back to his main
b, which was to smell the lilacs and honey-
ckle in people's backyards, look at their cats
ıd chickens and dogs, and the big old elms,
ıtch for turtles laying eggs in a sandpile next
a pond, listen to the toads purring a song. I
ıs outdoors a great deal, too, scouting for rib-
ın snakes, milk snakes, spotted salamanders,
reech owls, and had come to be known to the
ıstman and other itinerants on our road as Na-
re Boy: as in, "Hey, Nature Boy!"

But scenery had more pull for everyone then.
eople commonly spent time outside and, with-
it air-conditioning, knew what the weather
as, and, because their eardrums were in better
ape, heard more subtleties in the quiet air. In-
cts, breezes in the leaves. The out-of-doors
as a virtual newspaper that could be read at a
ance by a great many people—limy soil or wet
il recognized by its flowers and plants, a sky-
ne of trees identified by species and even board
et. We had glided through the magical "emp-
ness" of Nebraska by night, and then Utah's
ajesty too, missing both because we couldn't
e in the dark. But neither would have regis-
red on our minds as landscape used to do be-
re people flew. One's natural fear of the desert
so evaporates.

At Winnemucca (named for a Paiute chief),
breakfast, we didn't even wolf down extra wa-
r as we gazed outside, though here began the
ggedest stretch for California-bound pioneers.
ly companions, over bran muffins, were a
ung man from Bakersfield who had been to
sit his grandparents in Elko, his first expedi-
on out of his native state, and who struck me
one of that 24 percent of Americans who
n't find America on a world map; and a divor-
ee who looked scarcely older but was clever
ıd savvy, possessed of a six-year-old daughter
Salt Lake, and was off to visit her boyfriend, a
aveling accountant working in Reno.

The Cortez Mountains. The Shoshone
lountains. And Battle Mountain, a big com-
licated, battlemented one with snow on top.
Ve admired these. At the town of Lovelock,
ıe Trinity Range lies to the northwest and the
lumboldt Range to the southeast of the tracks.
or 300 miles we followed the Humboldt River
alley, till its waters utterly petered out. In
ıese "sinks" plants live on the dew at best and
ıve strength even by their dim coloration.

Down in the vestibule with the hard-case
nokers, I heard about divorce law and diabe-
es, bankruptcies and insurance-policy outrages,
ıd points-of-love across this sloppy, broad continent where the individuals I was talking with could go to collapse or else find the primordial bosom to cry on. "Blood is thicker than water." I said I'd lost $300,000 by my divorce—not to my poor wife, whom I bore no grudge, but because my father in his anger disinherited me.

Bereft people confess to having Parkinson's or Lou Gehrig's disease, or children who refuse to communicate with them, lulled by the tranquil clacketing of the train and its fateful inevitability of arrival (unless—big deal, compared to a plane!—it went off the tracks). A small, smiling senior citizen told me how he'd robbed a bank in his salad days, during the 1930s, the Great Depression. "Never caught." Another man told me about adulterous, lunch-hour seductions in Central Park. What fun in your thirties, your forties. Mud smeared on your pant leg, your suit jacket drenched after a thunderstorm—you'll find inspiration to explain it, running back to Rockefeller Center. "Necessity is really the mother of invention." Highlights of your life, he said.

An hour east of Sparks, Nevada, we encountered the Truckee River, debouching onto the desert from the Sierra Nevadas with a delicious sparkle and birds sporting in it and even a Sunday fisherman. The sight of running water again was exhilarating. My eyes dashed like feet to go wading. The land lunged upward a little, beginning to build toward the big spine of mountains that stood between us and the Pacific. My feelings were different from when we had approached the Rockies. The Rockies are a kind of midriff for the nation; cross it and you still have the desert ahead, a vast mileage. But the Sierras signify almost the end of the rainbow—goldfields, *Roughing It* stuff, or pristine, riverine forests and flowery bee meadows smelling like honey for a hundred miles, as John Muir described them, extending to redwood beaches lipped by the splendidly reiterative surf rimming the boundless Pacific. The pot o' gold. Letheland. Baghdad-by-the-Bay. Oranges for the picking. It's different, climbing toward California. Most of us have been happy as Cinderella there, at least if we cleared out before midnight.

UTAH'S MAJESTY WAS LOST TO US IN DARKNESS, BUT IT WOULD NOT HAVE REGISTERED ANYWAY AS LANDSCAPE USED TO BEFORE PEOPLE FLEW

At Sparks the *Zephyr* added an extra locomotive and changed engineers for the remaining eight hours to Oakland. Also three cars for the wiped-out losers in Reno, just ahead, who might be ready to go home earlier than they had expected. "The Fun Train" was parked on a sid-

...ing for the regulars who would stay until late.

Sparks is a railroad town, though the Nugget Hotel sticks up phallically in the middle of it. But Reno retains its wicked aura in my mind's eye, the divorce capital of the world, where rich dames took their cheating husbands to the cleaners and cowboys earned drinking money *at stud*. Harrah's and Circus Circus are located near the train station, and Bally's is three miles east, self-contained, with its own hairdressers, gift shops, restaurants, if you want to avoid the panhandlers that two yuppie gamblers who boarded complained of.

However, surprising myself, I went off and wept for a little, drawing the curtains in my mini-bedroom, as I sometimes do on a trip. The same circumstances that seem like freedom one minute are loneliness personified the next.

"It's a strange old world," said one of the coots in the bar car, where I went for a shot of comradeship.

My great-grandfather Hoagland helped haul supplies by mule and wagon for the construction of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe as it crossed Kansas to meet the Southern Pacific at Deming, New Mexico, in 1881, for the second cross-continental link. (The first was in 1869, when the Union Pacific, building from Omaha, met the Central Pacific, building from Sacramento, at Promontory Point, Utah.) And my grandfather Morley, on the other side, had his own little railroad of sorts—three locomotives that pulled virgin logs out of the old-growth forest to Grays Harbor, Washington, where they were loaded onto Japanese ships. My mother, too, was loaded onto a Japanese timber boat on the occasion of her falling in love with a man deemed unsuitable because he'd been previously married. She was twenty-one and, with her older brother Dave as a chaperone, was sent on a tour of Japan, Beijing, and the Great Wall of China, which, with the long bouts of seasickness coming and going, were expected to expunge the cad from her mind. (Thirty years later, however, and to my father's heartfelt dismay, they found each other again.)

THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SEEM LIKE FREEDOM ONE MOMENT ARE LONELINESS PERSONIFIED THE NEXT

Sitting in the lounge car, I gave my tablemate, a board-game inventor from Big Sur, a précis of my monetary situation. He said he had lost a house in the settlement of *his* divorce, but that he had just remarried: "a most amiable woman," with "a lap pool" behind *her* palisades house. She ran a decorating business, and after they had thrashed out the details of who would pay for what and what the deal was and were sitting poolside one morning over coffee, opening their mail as husband and wife, she'd handed him an envelope addressed to her.

"'This will amuse you, dear,' she tells me," he said. "It was a check from a bank for close to a hundred thousand bucks. 'This will come four times a year from my trust, so we can live where ever we want and do whatever we want.'"

I chatted with a goldminer from Winnemucca who operates a computer that is "as simple as the buttons on an elevator," as he assured me. It administers cyanide, lime, and water in the correct proportions to reduce the ore to 90 percent gold, which is then shipped by highway to Salt Lake City. We talked about how those armored cars must be watched. Didn't they run decoys, empties?

"Yours sounds like a yuppie job," I suggested.

"It sure is that." He smiled, mellow.

We climbed slowly for an hour alongside the coils of the Truckee River (named for Winnemucca's father) from Reno to Truckee, in California, through foothills, saddles, and passes with a sweet range of views, more open and spacious than Colorado's had seemed. At 5,000 feet there was smooth, shallow snow on the ground, though snowsheds projected over the tracks to fend off avalanches in a few places. In the winter some of this region gets thirty-five feet of snowfall, and forty-two members of the Donner Party, stranded near here, had starved to death 143 years ago.

Big Hole Tunnel, four minutes long, constituted the Sierras' divide, as Moffat Tunnel had in the Rockies. I lunched with a tech analyst from Santa Cruz and a phys ed teacher from Martinez—a volleyball spiker, as she confessed when we asked. This two-hour passage from the resort hub of Truckee to Colfax, a tidier town of a thousand people, through the heart of the mountains was superbly scenic—Donner Pass and Emigrant Gap made easy. Castle Peak, Black Butte Mountain. Goldminers' flumes and slag piles, jumbo pine trees spreading over yellow sandy ground, and the astounding blue gorge, 2,000 feet deep, of the North Fork of the American River, flowing down to Sacramento eventually.

Our end-of-the-journey, lip-of-the-continent cheeriness was enhanced by blue skies, balmy weather, clean-looking meadows and forests, spiring creeks and granite ravines, cerulean lakes, and grassy valleys. However hard it must have been to build this stretch of railroad—and at "Cape Horn," Chinese laborers were lowered in baskets to hack at the cliff—the ride nowadays is benignly dreamy.

I lounged in the lounge with a San Francisco legal eagle of the female persuasion whose ca-

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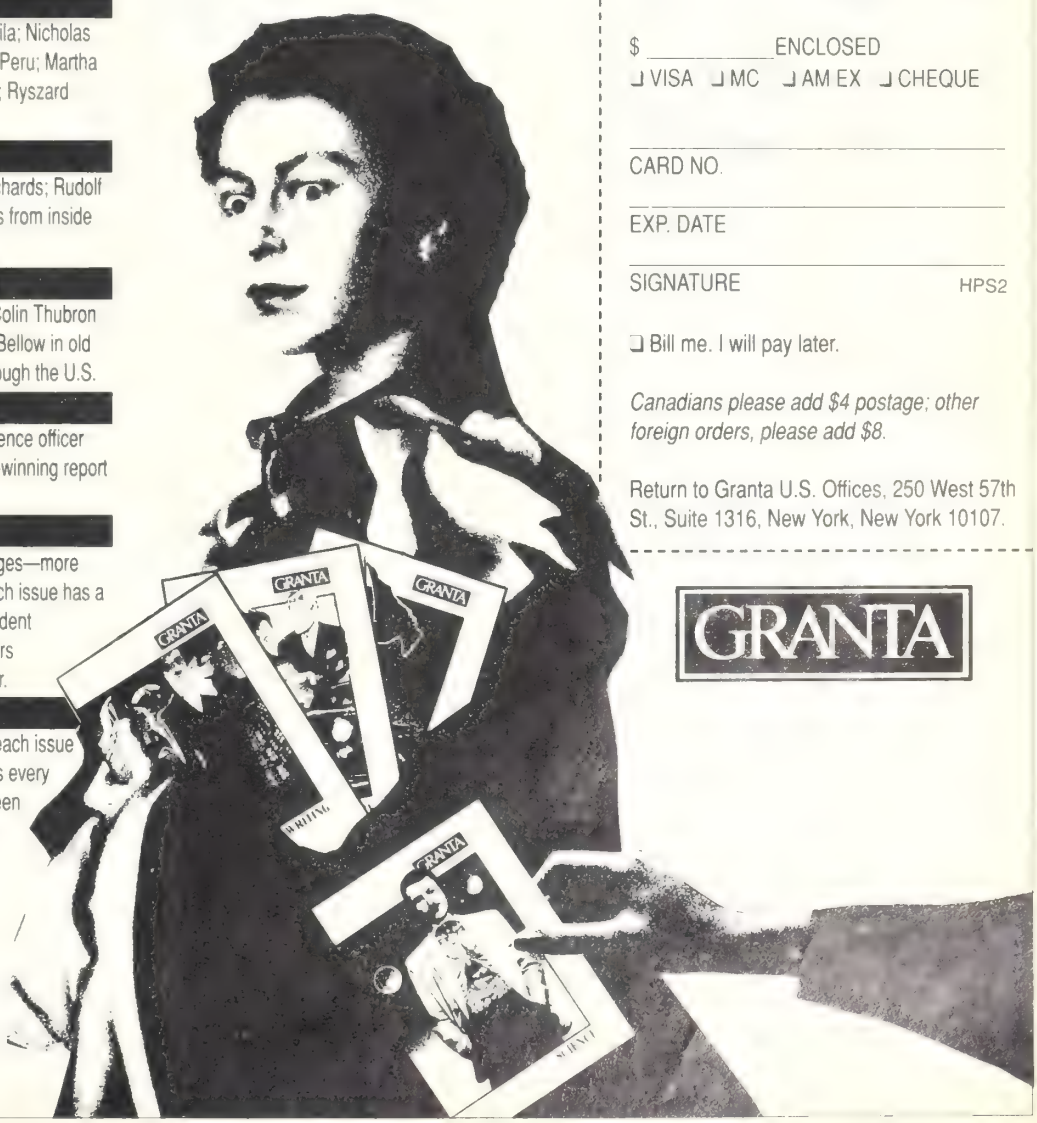
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GRANTA

reer might be a paradigm for many Californians', though she was stubby, not tall, black-haired, not blond. Claire said she was helping fold banks into one another and sell credit-card operations, but she had grown up on the Arkansas River in a ramshackle house that got regularly flooded, across the street from a tavern known informally as the Bucket of Blood, where her mother worked as a barmaid. Her father, a war vet, had a metal plate in his head from a jeep accident, and she inhabited the same bed as two of her sisters, sitting up late reading under the overhead light while they slept. She chose only "the thickest books" because two was her monthly quota from the library bookmobile: *The Count of Monte Cristo*, or Dickens, or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Also, she collected bottles at two cents apiece to buy books with at the secondhand furniture store down the street.

Her mother swore like a trooper, her father tried to maintain discipline with his razor strop—this was the 1950s—but her obsessive study habits mostly exempted her from whippings. Claire was hungry a lot, however, because he drank and both parents' pride was such that they made the children come home from school at lunchtime if there wasn't a quarter for each of them to pay to eat, instead of applying for the program of free meals, though there might be nothing to eat at home either and only beer nuts from the Bucket of Blood for supper.

I'D HOPED AS A YOUNGSTER TO RIDE IN A PARLOR CAR TO HOLLYWOOD, HAVING SOLD A BIG BOOK TO THE MOVIES

When her father died, the man at the furniture store became her mother's protector and let her run it for him, having a wife and another store in the next town upriver. So it provided a place where the seven kids could receive phone messages, and the mother, alone, was not too proud to accept a turkey at Thanksgiving from the church, and so on. Claire, working three jobs, saved money for college, only to find at eighteen that her mother had secretly spent it. Got through anyhow; took the civil service exam as an escape. Sought a posting to New York City with the IRS; did law school at night; saw the city courtesy of her fifty-year-old bachelor boss. Practiced there briefly; then drove west listening to tapes for the California bar exam.

"You get the picture?" she asked. "And what brings you here? Is your pen for hire? Is your heart firm?"

I said I'd hoped as a youngster to ride in a parlor car in state to Hollywood, having sold a big book to the movies, but instead I was just going to Sacramento to teach.

"What a shame! Maybe you should be ridin' buses. That's where the stories are."

"Are they?"

"*Were*. I should take pity on you and tell yo my mother's story so you can go to Hollywood

"You have a feel for the underdog," I said.

We looked at the opulent lowlands—euca lypti, live oaks, walnut and fruit trees—inclin ing into the Central Valley. She had come th way from Denver for fun and had watched m gleaning what I could from our fello passengers.

"Why not?" she told me. "My mother wa born in Chicago, and when she was twelve, sh was shipped to L.A. to an aunt, said-to-be. He parents couldn't take care of her, but in two o three years she realized she was being trained b her 'aunt' for a prostitute's role. 'Mother' an 'daughter' for a father-and-son combo. So sh ran away. She borrowed and saved for a ticke home. But the bus driver she landed with, for 'prank,' a cruel and misogynist trick, made practice of stranding unattached girls at th Hoover Dam, which was under construction i 1931. He would tell them to get out and use th restroom, and drive away. So there she was, a the Arizona-Nevada borderline without he suitcase, without any money. Fifteen years old At the diner but couldn't even pay for her pie Forced to choose which trailer house full of con struction workers she should ask to spend th night in. My father was having coffee and h told her she'd better trust him—he was bette than the rest—and the rest just laughed—s what was she to do? He was 'a perfect gentle man,' she said. 'But one thing led to another.'

We were passing McClellan Air Force Base Claire was natty and neat, with a fin of a nose small freckled hands, and an attorney's inten ness, a nice but quick-vanishing smile.

"Make it a screenplay. There's your chance." She laughed.

We pulled into Sacramento, 1840s fur trading hub, 1850s gold-hunting center, term nus of the Pony Express from St. Joseph Missouri, in 1860–61. Sacramento was found ed, as "Nueva Helvetia," by a former Swis Army captain named John Sutter, who die penniless in the East three decades after gol was discovered on some of his land. A big rai road museum, a good jazz festival, and muc state politicking now mark the town.

Arrivals. Maybe it'll all come together in th Golden State, I thought, but the professor wh was supposed to meet me wasn't on the plat form. I wandered, pushing my luggage car through the station, and finally sat down, fir gering my packet of telephone numbers, whic extends nationwide.

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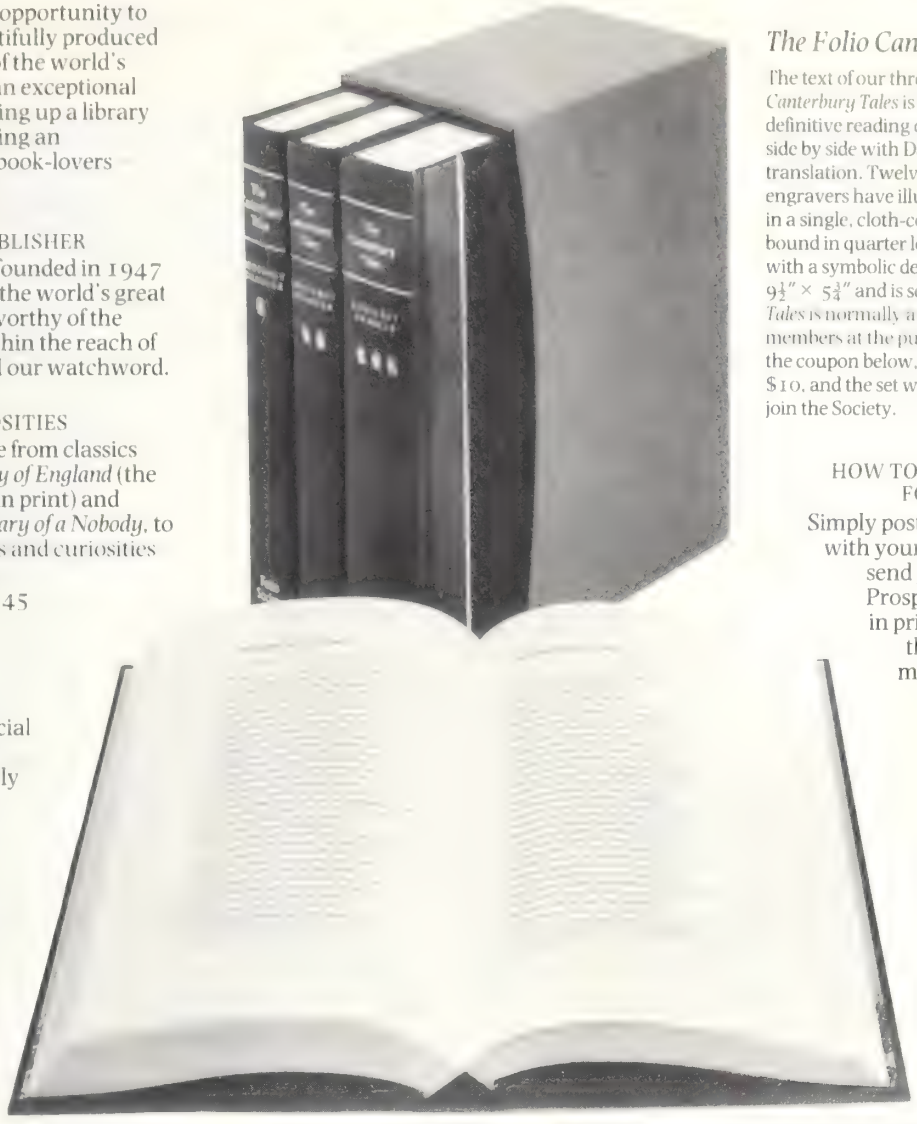
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FULL DAY

By Reynolds Price

Early afternoon in the midst of fall; but the sun was behind him, raw-egg streaks of speedy light from a ball-sized furnace in a white sky. Buck even skewed his rearview mirror to dodge the hot glare that would only be natural three hours from now. *Am I nodding off?* He thought he should maybe pull to the shoulder and rest for ten minutes. No, he'd yet to eat; his breakfast biscuit was thinning out. One more call; then he'd push on home, be there by dark. But he took the next sharp bend in the road; and damn, the light was still pouring at him, redder now.

Buck shrugged in his mind and thought of a favorite fact of his boyhood—how he'd searched old papers and books of his father's for any word on the great Krakatau volcanic eruption in 1883. He'd heard about it years later in school—how an entire island went up that August in the grandest blast yet known to man. The sea for miles was coated with powdered rock so thick that ships couldn't move. And for more than a year, sunsets everywhere on Earth were reddened by millions of tons of airborne dust. Buck's mother would tell him, each time he asked, that the night before her wedding in 1884 the sunset scared her worse than his father.

Like boys in general, he'd consumed disasters of all shapes and sizes but only from books and the silent movies of his childhood. Otherwise he often thought of himself as an average tame fish, safe in his tank. He'd missed the First World War by only a month and was several years too old at Pearl Harbor; so even now, at fifty-three, he'd never witnessed anything worse than a simple crossroads collision, one death with very little blood. He suddenly saw how the light this afternoon was similar to that, though hadn't he watched the wreck in springtime? Early April maybe—surely dogwood was blooming.

Buck had sat at the stop sign in what felt like a globe of silence and watched, slow-motion, as an old man plowed his toy Model A broadside into a gasoline truck, which failed to explode. He'd got out and joined the young truck driver in trying to ease the trapped old man (a country doctor, named Burton Vass, crushed by the steering wheel). Awful looking as he was, pinned into the seat, Dr. Vass wouldn't hear of their trying to move him till an ambulance came. But a good ten minutes before it appeared, the doctor actually grinned at their eyes. Then he said "I'm leaving" and left for good. So yes, Buck was maybe a fish in a tank. *Whose tank?* he wondered. But since he mostly thought about God in his prayers at night, he dropped the question now. God knew, he spent his life in a tank, this Chrysler gunboat, working to bring electric ease to country wives—stoves, steam irons, washers, freezers, fans.

He turned the mirror down again and tried the sun. It was now even stranger; and the leaves, which had only begun to die, were indi-

Reynolds Price's eighth novel, The Tongues of Angels, appeared last spring, and his third volume of poetry, The Use of Fire, came out last fall; both were published by Atheneum. He is James B. Duke Professor of English at Duke University.

dually pelted by light till they shivered and ished. Buck slowed and pulled to the narrow oulder by a tall pine woods. He'd pushed too r but, on the backseat, he had a wedge of rat cheese, a few saltines, and a hot bottled drink. That would calm his head.

The next thing he knew, a voice was speakg from a great distance, toward his left ear. *It's thing but your name. You're dreaming; dream*

then he realized his eyes had cleared. It was dimmer, yes; the sun was tamer. He glanced at the clock—a quarter past four.

Then from as far off as in his sleep, the older voice came at him again, "Are you all right?"

He looked to his left and was startled to see a woman and a child. Young woman, boy child maybe thirty and ten. They were two steps back from his side of the car; but at once their faces made him want them closer, though both were



. But the voice was only saying, *Sir?* Eventuala second voice, young and hectic, echoed the ord—*Sir? Please wake up.* Something in the tch of the *please* helped him rouse. But he dn't reflect that the tone of the voice was uch like that of the younger of his two sons at me.

It was almost night; he thought that first. But

tense with doubt and fear. He lowered the window. "Good afternoon."

The woman was the one who retreated a step.

Fearless, the boy came on to the car.

Buck could have touched him. But he settled for touching the brim of the boy's hat, a worn World War II bomber's cap. "Was I snoring too loud?"

otographs by Barry Marcus

The boy said, "I'm Gid Abernathy. No sir, I just thought you were dead."

It struck Buck cold. He actually put a hand out before him and flexed his fingers; then he worked them quickly one by one as if at a keyboard, running scales. He smiled at the boy. "Thanks, Gid, but not yet."

Gid's worry wasn't spent. "The school bus sets me down right here. Ten minutes ago, when I got out, I saw you slumped at the wheel and all; so I knocked on your glass and you didn't budge. I even tried to open your door—"

Buck noticed that, oddly, he'd locked it on stopping, a first time surely. It didn't strike him as brave or risky that a child tried to help so trustingly. This time and place—1953 in the coastal plain of North Carolina—were slow and safe; everybody knew it and moved accordingly. Gid was curious and very likely kind, not heroic. Still, Buck thanked him and started explaining how tired he'd got from skipping lunch. He should have known not to mention hunger in a woman's presence, not in those times. Maybe, in fact, he did know it and, half aware, brought down the rest of the day on himself.

The woman was wearing a clean housedress with short sleeves that showed her strong, but not plump, arms. Her face was an open country face; surely she also had never met with harm or deceit. While Buck thought that, she stepped up slowly through his thoughts and rested a long hand on Gid's bony shoulder. "I'm Gid's mother, Nell Abernathy. He always eats an after-school sandwich. I'll fix you and him one together, if you like." It seemed as natural, and she seemed as ready, as if they were in a cool kitchen now and she were slicing homemade bread and spreading butter that her own hands had churned.

Buck fixed on the best of her homely features. She had an amazing abundance of hair, not the new rust-red you saw so often now, since the war, but the deep auburn you imagine on women in daguerreotypes, the hair that looks as if each strand bears a vein that pipes blood through it. He'd never seen the like in his time; and he wanted to say so but thought it would sound too forward, too fast. He felt he was smiling anyhow and that now was the moment to say his own name, open the door, and stand up at least. But though his eyes had cleared in the nap, he suddenly wondered if his legs would obey. They felt long gone, not asleep exactly but not all there. He tried it though.

A half hour later he'd drunk buttermilk, eaten a thick tomato sandwich on store-bought bread, and said what he thought would be goodbye to Gid. Gid said he was due at a touch-football game a mile due north in the woods from here. As he shook Buck's hand, the boy made his plan sound natural as any town child's game. Only when his thin, short, gallant frame had shut the porch door and run down the steps did Buck recall his own country boyhood. *Who ever played football in the woods?* But he quickly imagined a clearing big enough for two pygmy teams. And for the first time, he thought of his father: *Who's the man around here? Is he dead, run off, or still at work?* But it didn't seem urgent to ask for him yet.

So he looked to Gid's mother, here at the sink four steps away. Her back was to him, and he knew on sight that now she'd literally forgotten he was here. Plain as she was, she was that good to see, that empty of wishes for him to perform. All his life he'd tried to show women the boundless thanks he felt for their being. From his long-dead mother on the day he was born to Lib his wife, just yesterday morning, Buck tried to tell each woman who helped him the strongest fact he knew in life, *You're reason enough to stay on here.* He honestly felt it and toward most women. To be sure, he knew there were bad women somewhere; he'd never met one. So he always meant the praise he gave them, mostly selfless praise with no hopes of any dramatic answer. And here past fifty, still he fell in love several times a month, with a face in a diner or crossing the street ahead of his bumper or dark on his back in a hot hotel room, staring at nothing better to see than a ceiling fan and old piss stains from the room above. He knew, and still could cherish, the fact of love on sight whenever his mind saw a winning girl; it would gently lie back on itself and tell him, *Buck, rest here for good.*

Not that he had. When he was twenty-seven he married Lib and had touched no other woman since, not with a purpose warmer than courtesy. That never stopped the joy or his ceaseless thanks. Hell, women had not only made him but named him—*Will* from his mother, *Buckeye* in childhood from his favorite sister. Now he fished out his pocket watch—quarter to five, Lib would be starting supper. He'd be half an hour late, no major crime. He folded the paper napkin with a care due Irish linen; and he said, "I'm going to be late for supper." But his legs didn't move to stand and leave.

Buck's guess had been right; Nell jerked at the sudden sound of his voice and looked around, wild-eyed for an instant. But calm again, she said, "You sure?"

"Of what?" Now his legs were trying to stand.

"That you can make it home?"

"Do I look that bad?"

She took the question seriously enough to move a step toward him and study his face. "You look all right. I just meant, you being dizzy on

e road and sleeping so deep in the car when id found you—"

He was upright now but his head was light. could drive this last stretch bound and ndfolded."

She looked again and said, "You may have ."

Buck meant for his grin to force one from ell. But no, it didn't work; she was solemn as urch, though better to see. Could he look at bad? He tried to remember where his car is parked. Had he driven on here from where pulled off? Had he left it there and walked re with them? And where was here? He oked all around him—a normal kitchen in a ll-worn house, maybe sixty years old, a high m ceiling, heart-pine floor, white walls oked to an even gray. He said, "Did we leave y car by the road?"

Nell seemed to nod.

So he looked to the door that Gid had walked rough and aimed for that. At first he thought crossed half the distance, but the final half en doubled on him and kept on multiplying e space till each further step was harder to ke; and he thought his feet were sinking rough the floor, then his calves and knees, his ist and chest, till even his mouth had sunk d was mute before he could call on Nell or God or the air itself for strength or rescue.

It felt like a healing year of nights, endless rk with heart-easing dreams. But when his es opened, it looked to Buck no darker than hen he had tried to leave the woman's kitch-. He heard a clock tick, it was near his face, it id 5:40—a black Big Ben, with the bone-ttling bell that he used to wake up early to at. His mother solemnly gave him one the day left home for his first real job. But surely he'd ld Lib to chuck it, years back. Or was he doing e thing he'd done so often lately—dreaming was young, in his first big boardinghouse, rong as a boy, with the body to prove it in day-ght and dark?

He was lying on his stomach on some kind of d, under light cover. With both dry hands, he lt down his length from the top of his butt to early the knees. All that skin was bare; and up-ard, the sides of his chest and shoulders were arm but naked too. And when he felt beneath mself, his dick and balls were warm and soft. till what surprised Buck was the calm soul in m—no fear, no regret in a mind as fearful as y not locked in a state institution. He shut th eyes and gradually searched the sheet be-eath him, far as he could reach. His right hand on met a block that was big but soft. His fin-rs stopped against it.

A woman's voice said, "You know you're safe."

Buck's eyes were still shut. In the hope of knowing whether this was a dream, he thought, *In three seconds I'll open my eyes. I'll look straight ahead, then shut them again.* He counted to three, looked, saw the same clock—5:42—and shut them again. It proved he was alive, awake and sane, though apparently stripped in a woman's bed. *Nell,* he finally thought of the name; then the memory of her face. He firmly believed he still hadn't touched her. *Two things may have happened. I fainted, somehow Nell got me in here, but why am I stripped? Or I've been here days, maybe years, and am sick.*

He had not been prone to wild thoughts, not in his life till now at least; and he halfway liked it. He suspected he smiled. *But Gid—oh Christ. Is Gid on hand?* Buck tried to see if his head could lift off the pillow—yes. He held it up and listened to the house. No sounds at all, not even from Nell. He settled back, brought his right hand to his face and felt for beard—the normal stubble of late afternoon. So he told her, "It feels very safe. Thanks, Nell. But did I collapse? Am I someway sick?"

She had seemed to sit on the edge of the bed, facing out from him toward the door—Buck saw the open door and a blank hall beyond it. And now she gave no sign of moving, surely not toward him. She said, "You had a little sinking spell. You may have blanked out, but you didn't fall hard. I helped you in here. You slept half an hour."

"With you here beside me?"

"I just got back," she said.

"From where?"

"The phone. I called your wife."

"How do you know her?"

Her voice was smiling. "You'll have to excuse me, but I searched your pocket and found her number. I didn't know what—"

Buck said, "Don't worry. But what did you say?"

"That you stopped by here, just feeling weak. That I thought you'd be back on the road soon, but did she know anything I ought to know?"

Buck almost laughed, "Such as, am I a killer?"

Her voice stayed pleasant. "Such as, do you have seizures? Are you diabetic?"

"What did Lib say?"

"Is Lib your wife? She said you were normal, far as she knew, just maybe exhausted."

Buck smiled but, on its own, his mind thought, *Exactly. Nobody but Lib's allowed to be sick.* Lib was having what she herself called "the longest menopause on human record." Good-hearted as she was till five years ago, in the midst of that winter—with no word of warn-

[illegible] bolted upright as was [illegible] but
[illegible]n end, Buck could hardly see her, much
[illegible]ouch and warm her. Next she seemed to
[illegible] unstunned eyes, sat all [illegible] her body, to
watch herself—her own long stock of pains and
self-pity, when he'd been the famous complain-
[illegible]

By now they could sometimes laugh about it; and everywhere else in her life with others—their sons, her friends—Lib seemed to be waking from a long hard dream. She'd yet to welcome him truly back. And even if she did, the harm was done now and might never heal. She'd turned from his care and need so often



that Buck was permanently lonesome in ways he hadn't felt since boyhood, roaming the deep [illegible]ls north of his house and pressing his lips to dry tree bark, just for something to lean his body against, some living thing to know that young Buck was clean and warm and could be touched with pleasure.

His right hand had stayed where it found Nell's hip. Three layers of cover kept them apart; he'd never probed or tried to stroke her, and she'd never pressed back into his fingers. A[illegible] he went on waking, he began to like thei[illegible] balked contact. It gave him a trace of the friend[illegible]ly warmth of his sister Lulie, who was less thar[illegible] one year older than he and with whom he'[illegible] slept till his sixth birthday—pups in a box warm and moving like a single heart.

He thought the next question and asked i[illegible] clearly, "Whose room is this?" Before Nel[illegible] could speak, he thought of the several answer[illegible] he dreaded—her husband's and hers, ever[illegible] young Gid's. Not that he feared their linen an[illegible] blankets, he just hoped to be in an open space[illegible] one he could rest in from here on out. He fel[illegible] that happy, and it sprang up[illegible] through him in a peacefu[illegible] flow.

Nell said, "My father buil[illegible] this bed, oh sixty years ago[illegible] He and Mother used it, al[illegible] their life together. She die[illegible] and he came here to live with[illegible] us, brought nothing much bu[illegible] his clothes and this bed. He[illegible] helped us a lot till he went[illegible] last winter."

"He died?"

"Pneumonia."

"So it's you and the boy, or[illegible] your own now?"

"Seems like," she said. She[illegible] gave a little chuckle as if she[illegible] sat alone on the moon and[illegible] watched her distant amazing[illegible] life.

"How do you live?"

She laughed out brightly[illegible] "Like squirrels in the trees[illegible] No, I sew for people. Gid[illegible] works in the summer, on the[illegible] next farm over. My dad left us[illegible] a small piece of money. We[illegible] do all right, nothing grand[illegible] but enough."

Then the lack of a husband[illegible] and father was sure. *I'll ask to[illegible] stay*. Buck understood that[illegible] the thought should have[illegible] shocked him. It didn't. The[illegible] calm poured on through his[illegible] chest, and for several minutes he napped again. When he came to, his right hand was back by[illegible] his side; and he spoke without looking. "Why[illegible] am I naked?"

She said, "Remember? It was your idea. You[illegible] had a little accident, when you blacked out."

"Oh God, I'm sorry."

Nell said, "Forget it. It was just in the front, a[illegible] spot the size of a baby's hand."

"Did I wet my shirt too?"

"Not a bit," she said. "That was your idea; I ied to stop you."

Then I have to stay.

She said, "I've got you some clean clothes at."

"You're a lightning seamstress." But then he ought, *Her husband's clothes.*

"My dad's," she said. "You are his same size."

"I couldn't accept them."

"Oh he'd be thrilled. He couldn't bear to aste a half inch of string. And Gid'll be way o tall when he's grown."

"You good at predicting the future?" Buck aid.

She laughed again. "Height runs in his fam-y, most of the men—"

Buck rushed to stop her before she clouded ie good air between them with a useless name, I'll be much obliged then, for one pair of ants."

Nell said, "They're laid out here on the chair, hakis as clean as cloth ever gets and a clean air of step-ins. I'm bound to go now and start ur supper. You think you feel like trying to and?" She seemed unhurried but as bent on eaving as if a walk to the dark heart of Africa ced her now.

Never, no ma'm, I'll lie right here. But he tried o move both legs and they worked. And his yes were clear. All that refused was his mind; *tay here. You're actually needed here. Not so, she nd Gid are doing all right. Ask her though; just see hat she says.* Buck heard his voice say the reck-ss thing, "Nell, what if I said, 'Please let me tay'?"

He expected she'd wait to think that rough. And at once she rose from the edge of ie bed and took three steps on the bare wood oor. Then she said, "We had this time, here ow. Your own supper's cooking, up the road, his minute."

As her low voice moved, Buck knew she was ght. She seemed to know much more than he emembered; whatever had happened, if any-hing new, it hadn't changed the tone of her oice. So at least he could trust that he hadn't een cruel or made a promise that he couldn't eep. Then he saw his course clearly. The de-ent thing was to try standing up, getting ressed, saying thank you, and heading on ome. So he turned to his side and threw off the over. He saw his bare body, then said "*I'm sor-y*" and reached again for the sheet at least, to ide his lap. For the first time that he remem-ered here, he looked toward Nell.

She stood by a tall mahogany wardrobe and as half turned away, lifting a bathrobe from he high-backed chair. She was naked as he and ad been naked all that time she was near him. Before she could cover herself, Buck rushed to print her body deep in his mind. She was still young everywhere, with firm pale skin and no visible scars (Lib's side was pocked by the cavernous scar of a ruptured appendix). And the hair of her crotch was the same high color of life and health that she showed the world on her striking head. Then she was hid in the faded robe; and with no further look or word, she brushed on past him and left the room.

Buck went to the same chair, found his pants in a clean ragged towel, his shirt on a hanger—Nell had managed to iron it—a pair of blue boxer shorts, and the khakis she mentioned. He put on his socks first, the shirt, then the pants. They were stiff with starch and two inches short. He thought of his mother's old comic greeting for out-grown pants, "Son, I see you're expecting high water" (they lived twenty miles from the Roanoke River, a famous flooder).

Was this time out, here under this roof, some high-water mark in all his life? With the tender mind and heart he got from his mother at birth, Buck had wanted an unadventurous life. And except for Lib's three awful labors (two live boys and one dead girl), he'd virtually got it. His chief adventures had come in his head. Alone on the road, he sometimes lived through active nights with imaginary women. But mostly he still enacted each possible threat to life and limb any time his family stepped out of sight. And his own body, strong till now, had always seemed a rickety bridge over too deep a gorge for a confident life in some place hard as the present world.

So sure, whatever had happened here—if nothing but what Nell owned up to, a fainting spell and a half hour rest—was like a splendid volunteer, the giant flower that suddenly blooms at the edge of the yard, where you least expect, from a secret hybrid in last year's seed that has bided its time. When he'd tied his shoes, he stepped to the dark old mirror and smoothed his tangled hair. *Nothing visibly changed, not to my eyes—and who knows me better? Well, Lib, but she won't see this time, whatever happened here. And if anything did, it was gentle and finished.* He could hear Nell drawing water in the kitchen. In less than an hour, if fate agreed, he'd be in his own house, among his first duties. He bent again to the peeling mirror and awarded his face a final grin. Then he went out to thank Nell Abernathy for one happy day.

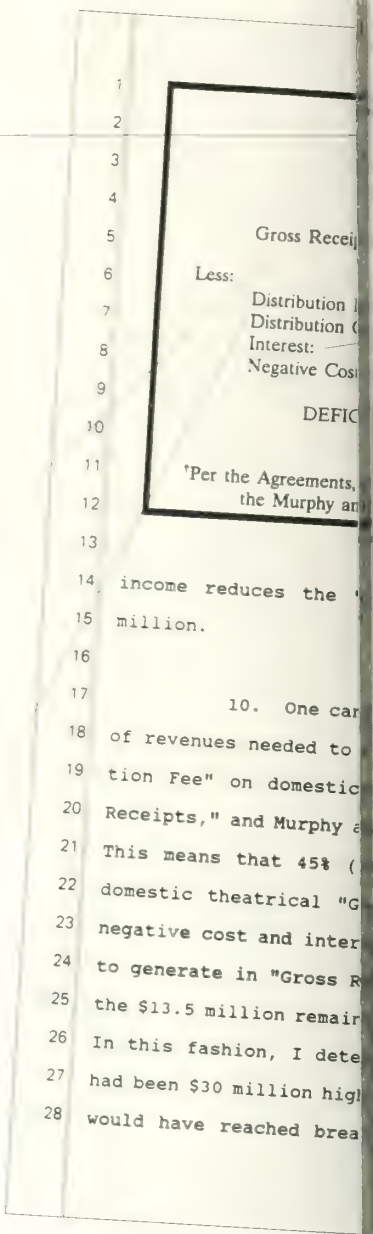
In four months Buck will die from a growth that reached decisive weight in his body this full afternoon and threw him down.

His elder son has made this unreal gift for his father on the eighty-ninth passing of Buck's birthday, though he died these thirty-five years a

PIX FIX

Accounting at Hollywood stud

The *Trouble in Paradise* Lawsuit: In November 1988 writer Art Buchwald and producer Alain Bernheim sued Paramount Pictures for breach of contract, arguing that the Eddie Murphy vehicle *Coming to America*—the second-highest-grossing film that year—was based on a story by Buchwald that Paramount had originally contracted Bernheim to produce. The Los Angeles Superior Court agreed, and ruled that Paramount must pay Buchwald and Bernheim their due share. The response from Paramount? The studio claims it *lost money* on the film, so no "net participation" profits were forthcoming. Now, in a new phase of the litigation likely to commence this winter, the court will examine Paramount's books—it could be the first time a major studio will stand trial for its accounting practices. Table I, from the sworn declaration of Carmen Desiderio, a Paramount VP for contract accounting, purports to demonstrate just how *Coming to America* managed to "lose" money; what the table and Desiderio's calculations would seem to show is the accounting fantasia of the business end of the movie business.

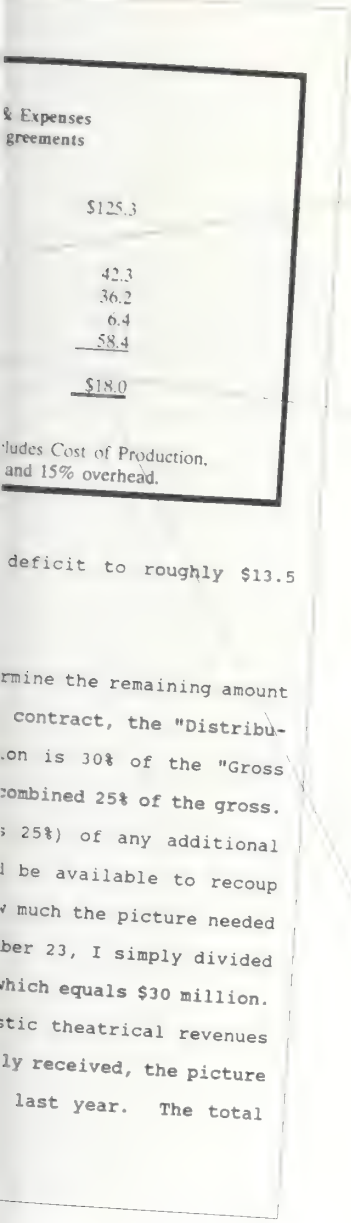


The *Outrageous Fortune* Is *Less Than Zero* Gambit: By December of 1989, *Coming to America* had grossed $320 million worldwide, including domestic box office ($129 million), foreign box office ($138 million), HBO, soundtrack, etc. Paramount claims the modest amount of $125.3 million as its share after the exhibitors and middlemen took their cuts. But, assert the plaintiffs, this figure includes only 20 percent of the $44.5 million Paramount collected from home video sales—the studio stashed the remaining $35.6 million in its own video subsidiary, out of reach of "net" participants. Moreover, Paramount so far has refused to provide details of its pay-television revenues. Could this mean millions of dollars more?

The *Welcome to L.A.* Shock-of-Force Tactic: The distribution fee is the amount the studio awards itself to maintain its own distribution arm, which oversees advertising, transportation of reels, etc. It's a percentage of the gross—nearly pure profit—and also the figure the studios use to withhold profits from the majority of "talent"—actors, writers, directors—who, enticed by a vision of "back end" riches, accept a "net participation" profit-sharing deal. The catch: After the studio subtracts the distribution fee, there is often no "net." However, a few Hollywood people are powerful enough to cut the big cost: "gross participation"—a straight percentage of the gross receipts *before* the studio lops off its distribution fee. Who commands "true gross"? No one in Hollywood is certain of the complete list, but everyone loves to speculate: Murphy, Stallone, Nicholson, Cruise.

) ADD?

quare, divides, *by Leslie Brenner*


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The *High Anxiety, Risky Business* Swindle: Moviemaking is a perilous enterprise in which two out of three movies "lose" money, studio execs often weep, and so, being wise guys, they deduct from gross receipts the interest (125 percent of the prime rate) that their capital could have earned had it been parked in a CD rather than "gambled" on a movie. Furthermore, Paramount calculated some of this interest on monies eventually doled out to Murphy and director John Landis for their gross participations—funds that were not advanced as a cost of production but were paid out *after* gross receipts were in. Paramount also pays itself interest on the negative-cost markups mentioned below. Thus Paramount pays itself over and over again, just for being Paramount, pockets more than $50 million, then calls the picture a loser.

The *Golden Child, Terms of Endearment* Padding Trick: This amount is the cost of developing and producing a negative from which prints are made. As the footnote indicates, the negative cost included direct production costs totaling a whopping $40 million. Not so, say the plaintiffs. Their research has Paramount marking up the cost of oil and gas 50 percent and lumber that is rechargeable to other productions 5 percent—and burying here $1 million in Eddie Murphy entourage expenses: limousines, bodyguards, mobile phones, VCRs, boom boxes, even $256 for one trip to McDonald's. Why should Paramount lavish such endless love on Murphy? Because Murphy's movies grossed $883 million for the studio from 1982 through 1988.

The *Easy Money, Gone With the Wind* Finale: Here's the bottom line "loss" figure. Never mind Paramount Communication Inc.'s own 1989 annual report, which brags to its stockholders that *Coming to America* had "strong domestic and international theatrical results" that significantly benefited "motion picture earnings for fiscal 1988." If the Los Angeles Superior Court agrees with Buchwald's and Bernheim's contentions about Paramount's accounting practices, the plaintiffs will win millions in compensatory damages. If the court finds clear evidence of "fraud, oppression or malice" by Paramount, the two may be entitled to punitive damages as well. But even more significant is that the major studios would be forced to change the way they do business—no longer would the usually empty promise of "net participation" suffice, and no longer would the major studios be allowed to justify their accounting practices on the grounds that talent agrees to them. Is this the turning point? Will the studios have to stand and deliver? Or will the court render them untouchables?

Leslie Brenner is a writer living in New York City.

A CLACK OF TINY SPARKS

Remembrances of a gay boyhood

By Bernard Cooper

Theresa Sanchez sat behind me in ninth-grade algebra. When Mr. Hubbley faced the blackboard, I'd turn around to see what she was reading; each week a new book was wedged inside her copy of *Today's Equations*. The deception worked; from Mr. Hubbley's point of view, Theresa was engrossed in the value of X, but I knew otherwise. One week she perused *The Wisdom of the Orient*, and I could tell from Theresa's contemplative expression that the book contained exotic thoughts, guidelines handed down from high. Another week it was a paperback novel whose title, *Let Me Live My Life*, appeared in bold print atop every page, and whose cover, a gauzy photograph of a woman biting a strand of pearls, head thrown back in an attitude of ecstasy, confirmed my suspicion that Theresa Sanchez was mature beyond her years. She was the tallest girl in school. Her bouffant hairdo, streaked with blond, was higher than the flaccid bouffants of other girls. Her smooth skin, plucked eyebrows, and painted fingernails suggested hours of pampering, a worldly and sensual vanity that placed her within the domain of adults. Smiling dimly, steeped in daydreams, Theresa moved through the crowded halls with a languid, self-satisfied indifference to those around her. "You are merely children," her posture seemed to say. "I can't be bothered." The week Theresa hid *101 Ways to Cook Hamburger* behind her algebra book, I could stand it no longer and, after the bell rang, ventured a question.

"Because I'm having a dinner party," said Theresa. "Just a couple of intimate friends."

No fourteen-year-old I knew had ever given a dinner party, let alone used the word "intimate" in conversation. "Don't you have a mother?" I asked.

Theresa sighed a weary sigh, suffered my strange inquiry. "Don't be so naive," she said. "Everyone has a mother." She waved her hand to indicate the brick school buildings outside the window. "A higher education should have taught you that." Theresa draped an angora sweater over her shoulders, scooped her books from the graffiti-covered desk, and just as she was about to walk away, she turned and asked me, "Are you a fag?"

There wasn't the slightest hint of rancor or condescension in her voice. The tone was direct, casual. Still I was stunned, giving a sidelong glance to make sure no one had heard. "No," I said. Blurted really, with too much defensiveness, too much transparent fear in my response. Octaves lower than usual, I tried a "Why?"

Theresa shrugged. "Oh, I don't know. I have lots of friends who ar fags. You remind me of them." Seein me bristle, Theresa added, "It was jus a guess." I watched her erect, angor back as she sauntered out the class room door.

She had made an incisive and time ly guess. Only days before, I'd invite Grady Rogers to my house after schoo to go swimming. The instant Grad shot from the pool, shaking wate from his orange hair, freckled shou ders shining, my attraction to mem bers of my own sex became a matter could no longer suppress or rationali ize. Sturdy and boisterous and gap toothed, Grady was an inveterat backslapper, a formidable arm wres tler, a wizard at basketball. Grady wa a boy at home in his body.

My body was a marvel I hadn't got ten used to; my arms and legs would sometimes act of their own accord knocking over a glass at dinner o flinching at an oncoming pitch. I wa never singled out as a sissy, but I could have been just as easily as Bobby Kea gan, a gentle, intelligent, and introv verted boy reviled by my classmates And although I had always been aware of a tacit rapport with Bobby, a suspicion that I might find with him a rich friendship, I stayed away. In stead, I emulated Grady in the belie that being seen with him, being like him, would somehow vanquish m self-doubt, would make me normal by association.

Bernard Cooper is the author of Maps to Anywhere, *a collection of essays published by the University of Georgia Press. His essay "Nick's Barber Shop" appeared in the June 1990 issue of* Harper's Magazine. *He lives in Los Angeles.*

Apart from his athletic prowess, ady had been gifted with all the ppings of what I imagined to be a rmed life: a fastidious, aproned ther who radiated calm, maternal ncern; a ruddy, stoic father with a ack for home repairs. Even the gerses' small suburban house in llywood, with its spindly Colonial niture and chintz curtains, was a tament to normalcy.

Grady and his family bore little reblance to my clan of Eastern Euean Jews, a dark and vociferous ple who ate with abandon—matzo d halvah and gefilte fish; foods govim couldn't pronounce—who oled one another ring endless games canasta, making e simplest remark out the weather o a lengthy philoohical discourse on sun and the seas and the passage time. My mother s a chain-smoker, dervish in a frowhousedress. She owed her love in e most peculiar and sessive ways, like ending hours exacting every seed om a watermelon fore she served it perfectly bite-sized, ometric pieces. Preoccupied and pertually frantic, my ther succumbed to uts of absentmindness so profound e'd forget what e was saying midntence, smile and ush and walk away. A divorce attory, my father wore roomy, iridescent ts, and the intricacies, the deceits herent in his profession, had the efct of making him forever tense and gilant. He was "all wound up," as y mother put it. But when he rexed, his laughter was explosive, his sposition prankish: "Walk this y," a waitress would say, leading us our table, and my father would imic the way she walked, arms imbo, hips liquid, while my mother and I were wracked with laughter. Buoyant or brooding, my parents' moods were unpredictable, and in a household fraught with extravagant emotion it was odd and awful to keep my longing secret.

One day I made the mistake of asking my mother what a "fag" was. I knew exactly what Theresa had meant but hoped against hope it was not what I thought; maybe "fag" was some French word, a harmless term like "naive." My mother turned from the stove, flew at me, and grabbed me by the shoulders. "Did someone call you that?" she cried.

"Not me," I said. "Bobby Keagan."



"Oh," she said, loosening her grip. She was visibly relieved. And didn't answer. The answer was unthinkable.

For weeks after, I shook with the reverberations from that afternoon in the kitchen with my mother, pained by the memory of her shocked expression and, most of all, her silence. My longing was wrong in the eyes of my mother, whose hazel eyes were the eyes of the world, and if that longing continued unchecked, the unwieldy shape of my fate would be cast, and I'd be subjected to a lifetime of scorn.

During the remainder of the semester, I became the scientist of my own desire, plotting ways to change my yearning for boys into a yearning for girls. I had enough evidence to believe that any habit, regardless of how compulsive, how deeply ingrained, could be broken once and for all: The plastic cigarette my mother purchased at the Thrifty pharmacy—one end was red to approximate an ember, the other tan like a filtered tip—was designed to wean her from the real thing. To change a behavior required self-analysis, cold resolve, and the substitution of one thing for another: plastic, say, for tobacco. Could I also find a substitute for Grady? What I needed to do, I figured, was kiss a girl and learn to like it.

This conclusion was affirmed one Sunday morning when my father, seeing me wrinkle my nose at the pink slabs of lox he layered on a bagel, tried to convince me of its salty appeal. "You should try some," he said. "You don't know what you're missing."

stration by Russell O. Jones

You deserve a factual look at...

Hussein and Arafat – Birds of a Feather

How they engineered the bloody events in Jerusalem

On Monday, October 8,1990, on the Jewish festival of Succoth, about 20,000 Jews assembled for prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the holiest place in the Jewish religion. Two mosques are also located on Temple Mount, high above the Wall. Because of the indulgence and respect for other religions, the Israeli authorities allow them to operate freely and fully under the jurisdiction of Moslem religious authorities. Suddenly and without any provocation, whipped into a frenzy by their clerics, a raging mob of 4,000 Moslem Arabs stormed out of the mosques and loosed a barrage of rocks, bricks, and Molotov cocktails on the worshipping crowd below them. Twenty-eight people were severely injured. By miracle, nobody was killed. The mob then attacked the Israeli police post and set it afire. The police responded, first with tear gas and then rubber bullets. When those ran out and when 40 police were at the point of being lynched they opened fire with live ammunition. Twenty Arabs died and twenty martyrs had been created.

What are the facts?

■ There is no question in anybody's mind that the bloody incident was engineered and organized by Saddam Hussein, the "Butcher of Baghdad", and Yasser Arafat, the master terrorist and "president" of the non-existent state of "Palestine". After virtually every Arab leader has turned against Hussein, Yasser Arafat remains steadfastly loyal to him. And why not? Both have the destruction of Israel at the very top of their agendas -- in fact Arafat has no other agenda; he surely doesn't care at all about the fate of Kuwait. The bloody incident on the Temple Mount served the purposes of both. They rightly expected that it would take, at least temporarily, the heat and the focus off Saddam Hussein and had the potential to weaken the tenuous common front between the United States and our newfound Arab "allies". As to Arafat, the incident was certain to put the "Palestinian problem", which because of the troubles in the Gulf had taken a back seat, once again into the spotlight. That twenty Palestinian Arabs had died was a small price to pay, because human life is cheap for both Hussein and Arafat. Naturally, they had hoped that a few hundred Jews would also die in that fusillade of rocks. But, by great good fortune, that turned out not to be.



Birds of a Feather: Saddam Hussein and Yasser Arafat, two enemies of the U.S. in loving embrace.

■ One of Saddam Hussein's and Yasser Arafat's main themes is the linkage of any possible withdrawal from Kuwait with a demand for Israeli withdrawal from the "West Bank". This is a ludicrous proposal and, so far at least, most of the Western world has called it just that. If the world's minorities problems must be solved, why not address the "Irish question", which has been festering for centuries? Why not settle the age-old grievances of the Basques, those of the ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia and, closest to home and right in Iraq, the justified despair of the Kurds, whose aspirations Saddam Hussein "solves" by poison gassing thousands, and by forcefully relocating the rest? Iraq has annexed Kuwait in an act of aggression motivated by greed. Israel came to administer (not to annex!) the "West Bank" and the Gaza strip as the result of its victory in the Six-Day War. Israel has always been ready to negotiate the ultimate status of these territories. It promised to do so in the Camp David Accords as the result of which it also returned the vast Sinai Peninsula to Egypt.

By his actions and by his statements, Yasser Arafat has clearly demonstrated that he is a bird of the same feather as Saddam Hussein. Arafat's immediate ambition is to shift the focus of interest from the Gulf to Israel, in order to gloss over the crimes of Hussein, to change the conflict of the World vs. Iraq into the conflict of the Arabs vs. Israel, and thus to break up the fragile coalition between the United States and its Arab "allies". The recent bloody incidents in Jerusalem were clearly provoked for that purpose by Arafat and the PLO, in connivance with Saddam Hussein. Regrettably, the United States in great haste, without even ascertaining the facts, and in order to curry favor with our new Arab "allies" (among them the murderous Syrians), introduced a resolution into the Security Council of the United Nations that condemned Israel's actions.

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"It's loaded with protein," ad[illegible]ed my mother, slapping a platter [illegible] sliced onions onto the dinette tabl[illegible] She hovered above us, cinching h[illegible] housedress, eyes wet from onio[illegible] fumes, the mock cigarette danglin[illegible] from her lips.

My father sat there chomping wi[illegible] gusto, emitting a couple of hear[illegible] grunts to dramatize his satisfactio[illegible] And still I was not convinced. After[illegible] loud and labored swallow, he told m[illegible] I may not be fond of lox today, b[illegible] sooner or later I'd learn to like i[illegible] One's tastes, he assured me, are de[illegible] tined to change.

"Live," shouted my mother ov[illegible] the rumble of the Mixmaster. "E[illegible] pand your horizons. Try new things[illegible] And the room grew fragrant with th[illegible] batter of a spice cake.

The opportunity to put their advic[illegible] into practice, and try out my plan [illegible] adapt to girls, came the followin[illegible] week when Debbie Coburn, a men[illegible] ber of Mr. Hubbley's algebra class, i[illegible] vited me to a party. She cornered m[illegible] in the hall, furtive as a spy, telling m[illegible] her parents would be gone for the ev[illegible] ning and slipping into my palm [illegible] wrinkled sheet of notebook paper. C[illegible] it were her address and telephon[illegible] number, the lavender ink in a tic[illegible] cursive. "Wear cologne," she ad[illegible] vised, wary eyes darting back an[illegible] forth. "It's a make-out party. An[illegible] thing can happen."

The Santa Ana wind blew relen[illegible] lessly the night of Debbie's part[illegible] careening down the slopes of the Ho[illegible] lywood hills, shaking the road sign[illegible] and stoplights in its path. As I walke[illegible] down Beachwood Avenue, tree[illegible] thrashed, surrendered their leave[illegible] and carob pods bombarded the pav[illegible] ment. The sky was a deep but lum[illegible] nous blue, the air hot, abrasive[illegible] electric. I had to squint in order t[illegible] check the number of the Coburn[illegible] apartment, a three-story buildin[illegible] with glitter embedded in its stucc[illegible] walls. Above the honeycombed ba[illegible] conies was a sign that read BEACH[illegible] WOOD TERRACE in lavender scrip[illegible] resembling Debbie's.

From down the hall, I could hea[illegible] the plaintive strains of Little Antho[illegible] ny's "I Think I'm Going Out of M[illegible] Head." Debbie answered the door be[illegible] decked in an Empire dress, the bodic[illegible]

e and orange polka dots, the rest a
ath of black and white stripes. "Op
" proclaimed Debbie. She turned
a circle, then proudly announced
t she'd rolled her hair in orange
e cans. She patted the huge un-
ving curls and dragged me inside.
lections from the swimming pool
he courtyard, its surface ruffled by
id, shuddered over the ceiling and
ls. A dozen of my classmates were
ted on the sofa or huddled together
corners, their whispers full of ex-
ed imminence, their bodies barely
cernible in the dim light. Drapes
aking the sliding glass doors bowed
with every gust of wind, and it
med that the room might lurch
m its foundations and sail with its
go of silhouettes into the hot Octo-
night.

Grady was the last to arrive. He
sed a six-pack of beer into Debbie's
is, barreled toward me, and slapped
back. His hair was slicked back
h Vitalis, lacquered furrows left by
comb. The wind hadn't shifted a
gle hair. "Ya ready?" he asked,
shing the gap between his front
th and leering into the darkened
om. "You bet," I lied.

Once the beers had been passed
ound, Debbie provoked everyone's
ention by flicking on the overhead
ht. "Okay," she called. "Find a
rtner." This was the blunt com-
and of a hostess determined to have
r guests aroused in an orderly fash-
n. Everyone blinked, shuffled
out, and grabbed a member of
e opposite sex. Sheila Garabedian
ided beside me—entirely at ran-
m, though I wanted to believe she
is driven by passion—her timid
ile giving way to plain fear as the
ht went out. Nothing for a moment
t the heave of the wind and the dis-
nt banter of dogs. I caught a whiff of
eila's perfume, tangy and sweet as
awaiian Punch. I probed her face
th my own, grazing the small scal-
p of an ear, a velvety temple, and
ough Sheila's trembling made me
nt to stop, I persisted with my mis-
on until I found her lips, tightly
aled as a private letter. I held my
outh over hers and gathered her
oulders closer, resigned to the possi-
lity that, no matter how long we
ood there, Sheila would be too
scared to kiss me back. Still, she ex-
haled through her nose, and I listened
to the squeak of every breath as
though it were a sigh of inordinate
pleasure. Diving within myself, I
monitored my heartbeat and respira-
tion, trying to will stimulation into
being, and all the while an image in-
truded, an image of Grady erupting
from our pool, rivulets of water sliding
down his chest. "Change," shouted
Debbie, switching on the light. Shei-
la thanked me, pulled away, and con-
tinued her routine of gracious terror
with every boy throughout the eve-
ning. It didn't matter whom I held—
Margaret Sims, Betty Vernon, Eliza-
beth Lee—my experiment was a fail-
ure; I continued to picture Grady's
wet chest, and Debbie would bellow
"change" with such fervor, it could
have been my own voice, my own in-
cessant reprimand.

Our hostess commandeered the
light switch for nearly half an hour.
Whenever the light came on, I
watched Grady pivot his head toward
the newest prospect, his eyebrows
arched in expectation, his neck
blooming with hickeys, his hair, at
last, in disarray. All that shuffling
across the carpet charged everyone's
arms and lips with static, and eventu-
ally, between low moans and soft os-
culations, I could hear the clack of
tiny sparks and see them flare here
and there in the dark like
meager, short-lived stars.

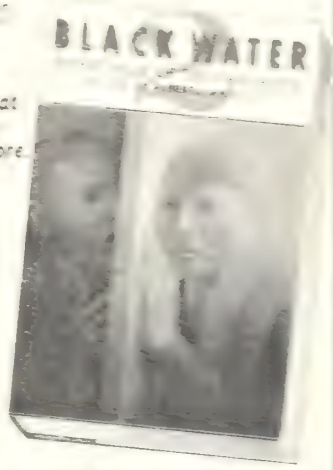
I saw Theresa, sultry and aloof as
ever, read three more books—*North
American Reptiles*, *Bonjour Tristesse*,
and *MGM: A Pictorial History*—be-
fore she vanished early in December.
Rumors of her fate abounded. Debbie
Coburn swore that Theresa had been
"knocked up" by an older man, a traf-
fic cop, she thought, or a grocer.
Nearly quivering with relish, Debbie
told me and Grady about the home for
unwed mothers in the San Fernando
Valley, a compound teeming with
pregnant girls who had nothing to do
but touch their stomachs and contem-
plate their mistake. Even Bobby Kea-
gan, who took Theresa's place behind
me in algebra, had a theory regarding
her disappearance colored by his own
wish for escape; he imagined that
Theresa, disillusioned with society,
booked passage to a tropical island,
there to live out the rest of her days
without restrictions or ridicule. "No
wonder she flunked out of school," I
overheard Mr. Hubbley tell a fellow
teacher one afternoon. "Her head was
always in a book."

Along with Theresa went my se
cret, or at least the dread that she
might divulge it, and I felt, for a
while, exempt from suspicion. I was,
however, to run across Theresa one
last time. It happened during a period
of torrential rain that, according to
reports on the six o'clock news,
washed houses from the hillsides and
flooded the downtown streets. The
halls of Joseph Le Conte Junior High
were festooned with Christmas deco-
rations: crepe-paper garlands, wreaths
studded with plastic berries, and one
requisite Star of David twirling above
the attendance desk. In Arts and
Crafts, our teacher, Gerald (he was
the only teacher who allowed us—*re-
quired* us—to call him by his first
name), handed out blocks of balsa
wood and instructed us to carve them
into bugs. We would paint eyes and
antennae with tempera and hang
them on a Christmas tree he'd made
the previous night. "Voilà," he
crooned, unveiling his creation from
a burlap sack. Before us sat a tortured
scrub, a wardrobe-worth of wire hang-
ers that were bent like branches and
soldered together. Gerald credited his
inspiration to a Charles Addams car-
toon he'd seen in which Morticia,
grimly preparing for the holidays,
hangs vampire bats on a withered
pine. "All that red and green," said
Gerald. "So predictable. So *boring*."

As I chiseled a beetle and listened
to rain pummel the earth, Gerald
handed me an envelope and asked me
to take it to Mr. Kendrick, the drama
teacher. I would have thought noth-
ing of his request if I hadn't seen The-
resa on my way down the hall. She
was cleaning out her locker, blithely
dropping the sum of its contents—
pens and textbooks and mimeo-
graphs—into a trash can. "Have a
nice life," she sang as I passed. I mus-
tered the courage to ask her what had
happened. We stood alone in the si-
lent hall, the reflections of wreaths
and garlands submerged in brown
linoleum.

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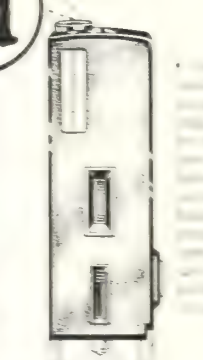
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d Mr. Kendrick walk together into
e faculty lounge or say hello at the
ter fountain, but there was nothing
ecially clandestine or flirtatious in
eir manner. Besides, no matter how
ute my scrutiny, I wasn't sure, short
a kiss, exactly what to look for—
at semaphore of gesture, what en-
ded word. I suspected there were
ns, covert signs that would give
em away, just as I'd unwittingly giv-
myself away to Theresa.

In the school library, a *Webster's* abridged dictionary lay on a wood- podium, and I padded toward it th apprehension; along with clues the bond between my teachers, I ked discovering information that ght incriminate me as well. I had cided to consult the dictionary dur- g lunch period, when most of the dents would be on the playground. lutched my notebook, moving in ch a way as to appear both studious d nonchalant, actually believing at, unless I took precautions, some- e would see me and guess what I was to. The closer I came to the podi- n, the more obvious, I thought, was r endeavor; I felt like the model of ne Visible Man in our science class, y heart's undulations, my over- ought nerves legible through trans- rent skin. A couple of kids riffled rough the card catalogue. The li- arian, a skinny woman whose per- tual whisper and rubber-soled shoes used her to drift through the room te a phantom, didn't seem to regis- r my presence. Though I'd looked dozens of words before, the pages lt strange beneath my fingers. *omer* was the first word I saw. *Homi- d. Homogenize.* I feigned interest nd skirted other words before I found e word I was after. Under the head- g HO • MO • SEX • U • AL was the terse finition: *adj. Pertaining to, character- ic of, or exhibiting homosexuality. –n. homosexual person.* I read the defini- on again and again, hoping the ords would yield more than they uld. I shut the dictionary, swal- wed hard, and, none the wiser, hur- ed away.

As for Gerald and Mr. Kendrick, I ever discovered evidence to prove or ispute Theresa's claim. By the fol- wing summer, however, I had over- eard from my peers a confounding amount about homosexuals: They wore green on Thursday, couldn't whistle, hypnotized boys with a piercing glance. To this lore, Grady added a surefire test to ferret them out.

"A test?" I said.

"You ask a guy to look at his fingernails, and if he looks at them like this" —Grady closed his fingers into a fist and examined his nails with manly detachment—"then he's okay. But if he does this"—he held out his hands at arm's length, splayed his fingers, and coyly cocked his head—"you'd better watch out." Once he'd completed his demonstration, Grady peeled off his shirt and plunged into our pool. I dove in after. It was early June, the sky immense, glassy, placid. My father was cooking spareribs on the barbecue, an artist with a basting brush. His apron bore the caricature of a frazzled French chef. Mother curled on a chaise longue, plumes of smoke wafting from her nostrils. In a stupor of contentment she took another drag, closed her eyes, and arched her face toward the sun.

Grady dog-paddled through the deep end, spouting a fountain of chlorinated water. Despite shame and confusion, my longing for him hadn't diminished; it continued to thrive without air and light, like a luminous fish in the dregs of the sea. In the name of play, I swam up behind him, encircled his shoulders, astonished by his taut flesh. The two of us flailed, pretended to drown. Beneath the heavy press of water, Grady's orange hair wavered, a flame that couldn't be doused.

I've lived with a man for seven years. Some nights, when I'm half-asleep and the room is suffused with blue light, I reach out to touch the expanse of his back, and it seems as if my fingers sink into his skin, and I feel the pleasure a diver feels the instant he enters a body of water.

I have few regrets. But one is that I hadn't said to Theresa, "Of course I'm a fag." Maybe I'd have met her friends. Or become friends with her. Imagine the meals we might have concocted: hamburger Stroganoff, Swedish meatballs in a sweet translucent sauce, steaming slabs of Salisbury steak. ■

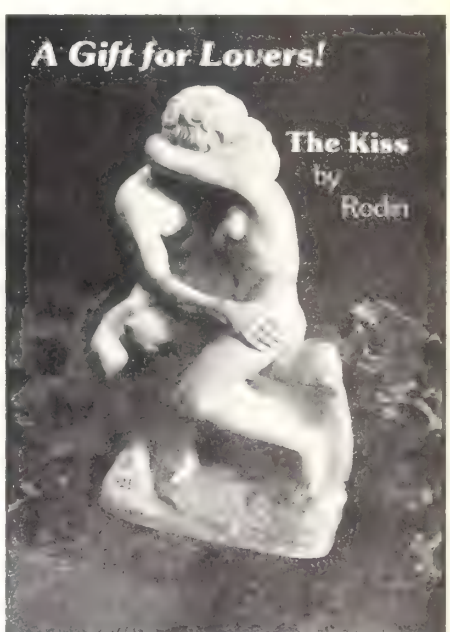
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WHY WE ARE STUCK IN THE SAND

Realpolitik in the Gulf: A game gone tilt

By Christopher Hitchens

On the morning before Yom Kippur late this past September, I found myself standing at the western end of the White House, watching as the color guard paraded the flag of the United States (and the republic for which it stands) along with that of the Emirate of Kuwait. The young men of George Bush's palace guard made a brave showing, but their immaculate uniforms and webbing could do little but summon the discomforting contrasting image—marching across our TV screens nightly—of their hot, thirsty, encumbered brothers and sisters in the Saudi Arabian desert. I looked away and had my attention fixed by a cortege of limousines turning in at the gate. There was a quick flash of dark beard and white teeth, between burnoose and kaffiyeh, as Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the exiled Kuwaiti emir, scuttled past a clutch of photographers and through the portals. End of photo op, but not of story.

Let us imagine a photograph of the emir of Kuwait entering the White House, and let us see it as a historian might years from now. What might such a picture disclose under analysis? How did this oleaginous monarch, whose very name was unknown just weeks before to most members of the Bush administration and the Congress, never mind most newspaper editors, reporters, and their readers, become a crucial visitor—perhaps *the* crucial visitor—on the President's autumn calendar? How did he emerge as someone on whose behalf the President was preparing to go to war?

We know already, as every historian will, that the President, in having the emir come by, was not concerned with dispelling any impression that he was the one who had "lost Kuwait" to Iraq in early August. The tiny kingdom had never been understood as "ours" to lose, as far as the American people and their representatives knew. Those few citizens who did know Kuwait (human-rights monitors, scholars, foreign correspondents) knew it was held together by a relatively loose yet unmistakably persistent form of feudalism. It could have been "lost" only by its sole owners, the Al-Sabah family, not by the United States or by the "free world."

What a historian might make of our imaginary photo document of this moment in diplomatic history that most citizens surely would not is that it is, in fact, less a discreet snapshot than a still from an epic movie—a dark and bloody farce, one that chronicles the past two decades of U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf. Call the film *Rules of the Game of Nations* or *Metternich of Arabia*—you get the idea. In this particular scene, the President was meeting at the White House with the emir to send a "signal" to Iraqi president Saddam Hussein that he, Bush, "stood with" Kuwait in wanting Iraq to pu out its troops. After the meetin Bush emerged to meet the press, n alone but with his national secur ty adviser, Brent Scowcroft. This, course, was a signal, too: Bush mea business, of a potentially milita kind. In the game of nations, howe er, one does not come right out a *say* one is signaling (that would, definition, no longer be signaling one waits for reporters to ask abo signals, one denies signaling is goi on, and then one trusts that unname White House aides and State Depar ment officials will provide the desire "spin" and perceptions of "tilt."

On ordinary days the trivial an empty language of Washington isn especially awful. The drizzle of repe itive key words—"perception, "agenda," "address," "concern, "process," "bipartisan"—does its jo of masking and dulling reality. But o this rather important day in an alt gether unprecedented process— lengthy and deliberate preparation f a full-scale ground and air war in faraway region—there was not a wo from George Bush—not a *word*—th matched the occasion. Instead, cit zens and soldiers alike would read hear inane questions from reporter followed by boilerplate answers fro their President and interpretations b his aides, about whether the drop-b of a feudal potentate had or had n signaled this or that intent.

There is a rank offense here to th

Christopher Hitchens is the Washington editor of Harper's Magazine.

of measure and proportion.
at matters of power and principle
n play, and there does in fact exist
ance to evolve a new standard for
rnational relations rather than
ist in the old follies of superpow-
isons d'état; and still the official
gue stammers and barks. Behind
he precious, brittle, Beltway in-
lies the only idea young Ameri-
s will die for in the desert: the idea
in matters of foreign policy, even
democratic republic, the rule is
ve it to us." Not everybody, after
can be fitted out with the wildly
ensive stealth equipment that the
tical priesthood requires to relay
and decipher the signal
flow.

The word concocted in the nine-
nth century for this process—the
rthand of Palmerston and Metter-
h—was "realpolitik." Maxims of
icism and realism—to the effect
t great states have no permanent
nds or permanent principles, but
y permanent interests—became
mon currency in post-Napoleonic
ope. Well, there isn't a soul today
Washington who doesn't pride
self on the purity of his realpoli-
And an organization supposedly
oted to the study and promulga-
n of such nineteenth-century real-
—the firm of Henry Kissinger
ociates—has furnished the Bush
ninistration with several of its
h officers, including Brent Scow-
ft and Deputy Secretary of State
vrence Eagleburger, along with
ch of its expertise.

Realpolitik, with its tilts and sig-
s, is believed by the faithful to keep
ions from war, balancing the pow-
and interests, as they say. Is what
are witnessing in the Persian
lf, then, the breakdown and failure
ealpolitik? Well, yes and no. Yes,
the sense that American troops
e been called upon to restore the
ance that existed before August 2,
90. But that regional status quo has
the past two decades known
rcely a day of peace—in the Per-
n Gulf, it has been a balance of ter-
for a long time. Realpolitik, as
cticed by Washington, has played
small part in this grim situation.
To even begin to understand this, one must get beyond today's tilts and signals and attempt to grasp a bit of history—something the realpoliticians are loath for you to do. History is for those clutching values and seeking truths; realpolitik has little time for such sentiment. The world, after all, is a cold place requiring hard calculation, detachment.

Leafing through the history of Washington's contemporary involvement in the Gulf, one might begin to



imagine the cool detachment in 1972 of arch-realpolitician Henry Kissinger, then national security adviser to Richard Nixon. I have before me as I write a copy of the report of the House Select Committee on Intelligence Activities chaired by Congressman Otis Pike, completed in January 1976, partially leaked, and then censored by the White House and the CIA. The committee found that in 1972 Kissinger had met with the Shah of Iran, who solicited his aid in destabilizing the Baathist regime of Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr in Baghdad. Iraq had given refuge to the then-exiled Ayatollah Khomeini and used anti-imperialist rhetoric while coveting Iran's Arabic-speaking Khuzistan region. The Shah and Kissinger agreed that Iraq was upsetting the balance in the Gulf; a way to restore the balance—or, anyway, to find some new balance—was to send a signal by supporting the landless, luckless Kurds, then in revolt in northern Iraq.

Kissinger put the idea to Nixon, who loved (and loves still) the game of nations and who had already decided to tilt toward Iran and build it into his most powerful regional friend, replete with arms purchased from U.S. manufacturers—not unlike Saudi Arabia today, but more on that later. Nixon authorized a covert-action budget and sent John Connally, his former treasury secretary, to Teheran to cement the deal. (So the practice of conducting American Middle East policy by way of the freemasonry of the shady oilmen did not originate with James Baker or George Bush. As the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, confided to Saddam Hussein in her now-famous meeting last July 25, almost as though giving a thumbnail profile of her bosses: "We have many Americans who would like to see the price go above $25 because they come from oil-producing states." Much more later on *that* tête-à-tête.)

The principal finding of the Pike Commission, in its study of U.S. covert intervention in Iraq and Iran in the early 1970s, is a clue to a good deal of what has happened since. The committee members found, to their evident shock, the following:

> Documents in the Committee's possession clearly show that the President, Dr. Kissinger and the foreign head of state [the Shah] hoped that our clients [the Kurds] would not prevail. They preferred instead that the insurgents simply continue a level of hostilities sufficient to sap the resources of our ally's neighboring country [Iraq].

Official prose in Washington can possess a horror and immediacy of its own, as is shown by the sentence that follows:

> This policy was not imparted to our clients, who were encouraged to continue fighting.

tration by Steve Brodner

"Not imparted." "*Not imparted*" to the desperate Kurdish villagers to whom Kissinger's envoys came with outstretched hands and practiced grins. "Not imparted," either, to the American public or to Congress. "Imparted," though, to the Shah and to Saddam Hussein (then the Baathists' number-two man), who met and signed a treaty temporarily ending their border dispute in 1975—thus restoring balance in the region. On that very day, all U.S. aid to the Kurds was terminated—a decision that, of course, "imparted" itself to Saddam. On the next day he launched a search-and-destroy operation in Kurdistan that has been going on ever since and that, in the town of Halabja in 1988, made history by marking the first use of chemical weaponry by a state against its own citizens.

By the by, which realpolitician was it who became director of the CIA in the period—January 1976—when the Kurdish operation was being hastily interred, the Kurds themselves were being mopped up by Saddam, and the Pike Commission report was restricted? He happens to be the same man who now wants you to believe Saddam is suddenly "worse than Hitler." But forget it; everybody else has.

Something of the same application of superpower divide-and-rule principles—no war but no peace, low-intensity violence yielding no clear victor or loser, the United States striving for a policy of Mutual Assured Destabilization—seems to turn up in Persian Gulf history once again four years later. Only now the United States has tilted away from Iran and is signaling Saddam Hussein. Iranians of all factions are convinced that the United States actively encouraged Iraq to attack their country on September 22, 1980. It remains unclear exactly what the U.S. role was in this invasion; but there is ample evidence of the presence of our old friends, wink and nod.

Recently, I raised the matter of September 1980 tilts and signals with Admiral Stansfield Turner, who was CIA director at the time, and with Gary Sick, who then had responsibility for Gulf policy at the National Security Council. Admiral Turner did not, he said, have any evidence that the Iraqis had cleared their invasion of Iran with Washington. He could say, however, that the CIA had known of an impending invasion and had advised President Jimmy Carter accordingly. Sick recalled that Iraq and the United States had broken diplomatic relations in 1967 during the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War, so that no official channels of communication were available.

Such contact as there was, Sick told me, ran through Saudi Arabia and, interestingly enough, Kuwait. This, if anything, gave greater scope to those who like dealing in tilts and signals. Prominent among them was realpol (by way of Trilateralism) Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was then Carter's national security adviser. As Sick put it: "After the hostages were taken in Teheran [in November 1979], there was a very strong view, especially from Brzezinski, that in effect Iran should be punished from all sides. He made public statements to the effect that he would not mind an Iraqi move against Iran." A fall 1980 story in London's *Financial Times* took things a little further, reporting that U.S. intelligence and satellite data—data purporting to show that Iranian forces would swiftly crack—had been made available to Saddam through third-party Arab governments.

All the available evidence, in other words, points in a single direction. The United States knew that Iraq was planning an assault on a neighboring country and, at the very least, took no steps to prevent it. For purposes of comparison, imagine Washington's response if Saddam Hussein had launched an attack when the Shah ruled Iran. Or, to bring matters up to date, ask yourself why Iraq's 1980 assault was not a violation of international law or an act of naked aggression that "would not stand."

Sick cautioned me not to push the evidence too far because, as he said, the actual scale of the invasion came as a surprise. "We didn't think he'd take all of Khuzistan in 1980," he said of Saddam. But nobody is suggesting that anyone expected an outright Iraqi victory. By switching sides, and by supplying arms to both belligerents over the next decade, the U.S. [illegible] tional security establishment m[illegible] have been acting consistently rath[illegible] than inconsistently. A market [illegible] weaponry, the opening of avenues [illegible] influence, the creation of superpow[illegible] dependency, the development of [illegible] entele among the national secur[illegible] forces of other nations, and a veto [illegible] the emergence of any rival power[illegible] these were the tempting prizes.

How else to explain the simul[illegible] neous cosseting of both Iran and I[illegible] during the 1980s? The backsta[illegible] dealing with the Ayatollah is a mat[illegible] of record. The adoption of Sadd[illegible] Hussein by the power worshipers a[illegible] influence peddlers of Washingto[illegible] D.C., is less well remembered. H[illegible] many daily readers of the *New Y[illegible] Times* recall that paper's 1975 char[illegible] terization of Iraq as "pragmatic, coo[illegible] erative," with credit for this sh[illegible] going to Saddam's "person[illegible] strength"? How many lobbyists a[illegible] arms peddlers spent how many ev[illegible] nings during the Eighties at t[illegible] Washington dinner table of Irac[illegible] U.S. ambassador, Nizar Hamdoo[illegible] And how often, do you imagine, w[illegible] Hamdoon asked even the most de[illegible] cately phrased question about his go[illegible] ernment's continued killing of t[illegible] Kurds, including unarmed wom[illegible] and children; its jailing and routi[illegible] torturing of political prisoners duri[illegible] the 1980s; its taste for the summa[illegible] trial and swift execution?

It can be amusing to look up so[illegible] of Saddam's former fans. Allow me [illegible] open for you the April 27, 1987, iss[illegible] of *The New Republic*, where we find [illegible] essay engagingly entitled "Back Iraq[illegible] by Daniel Pipes and Laurie Mylro[illegible] These two distinguished Establis[illegible] ment interpreters, under the unavoi[illegible] able subtitle "It's time for a U.[illegible] 'tilt,'" managed to anticipate the r[illegible] cent crisis by more than three yea[illegible] Sadly, they got the name of the e[illegible] emy wrong:

> The fall of the existing regime in Ir[illegible] would enormously enhance Iranian i[illegible] fluence, endanger the supply of o[illegible] threaten pro-American regim[illegible] throughout the area, and upset t[illegible] Arab-Israeli balance.

But they always say that, don[illegible] they, when the think tanks start thin[illegible]

; tanks? I could go on, but mercy
bids—though neither mercy nor
desty has inhibited Pipes from now
ocating, in stridently similar terms,
the prompt obliteration of
all works of man in Iraq.

Even as the Iraqi ambassador in
shington was cutting lucrative
aths through "the procurement
nmunity," and our policy intellec-
ls were convincing one another
t Saddam Hussein could be what
Shah had been until he suddenly
s not, other forces (nod, wink)
re engaged in bribing Iran and irri-
ing Iraq. Take the diary entry for
y 15, 1986, made by Oliver North
his later-subpoenaed notebook.
e childish scrawl reads:

Vaughan Forrest
— Gene Wheatin w/Forrest
— SAT flights to
— Rob Hacko disc. of Remington
— Sarkis/Cunningham/Cline/Secord
— Close to Sen. Hugh Scott
— TF 157, Wilson, Terpil et al blew up
Letter
— Cunningham running guns to
Baghdad for CIA, then weaps, to
Teheran
— Secord running guns to Iran

This tabulation contains the names
almost every senior Middle East
nrunner. The penultimate line is
pecially interesting, I think, be-
use it so succinctly evokes the "two
ick" balancing act under way in Iran
d Iraq. That tens of thousands of
ung Arabs and Persians were actu-
y dying on the battlefield . . . but
rget that too.

We now understand from sworn
stimony that when North and Rob-
t McFarlane, President Reagan's
rmer national security adviser, went
th cake and Bible to Teheran in
ay 1986, they were pressed by their
ıian hosts to secure the release of
ilitant Shiite prisoners held in Ku-
ait. Their freedom had been the
ice demanded by those who held
merican hostages in Beirut. Speak-
g with the authority of his presi-
ent, North agreed with the Iranians,
xplaining later that "there is a need
r a non-hostile regime in Baghdad"
nd noting that the Iranians knew
ve can bring our influence to bear
ith certain friendly Arab nations" to

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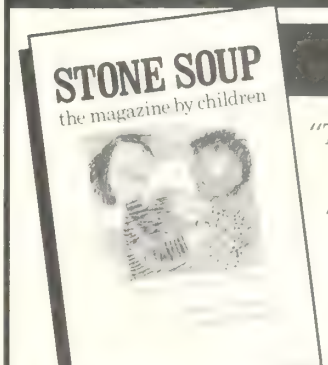
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get rid of Saddam Hussein.

Bringing influence to bear, North entered into the negotiations that hostage exchange, the disclosure of which, Reagan's secretary of state George Shultz said later, "made me sick to my stomach." North met the Kuwaiti foreign minister and later told the Iranians that the Shiite prisoners in Kuwait would be released if Iran dropped its support for groups hostile to the emir. When Saddam [illegible] decided, which took place at the height of his war with Iran, he must have been quite fascinated.

It's at about this point, I suspect, that eyes start to glaze, consciences start to coarsen, and people start to talk about "ropes and sand" and the general inpenetrability of the Muslim mind. This reaction is very convenient to those who hope to keep the waters muddy. It is quite clear that Saddam Hussein had by the late 1980s learned, or been taught, two things. The first is that the United States will intrigue against him when he is weak. The second is that it will grovel before him when he is strong. The all-important corollary is: The United States is a country that deals only in furtive signals.

It is against this backdrop—one of signals and nods and tilts and intrigues—and *not* against that of Bush's anger at Iraqi aggression (he is angry, but only because realpolitik has failed him) that one must read the now-famous transcript of the Glaspie-Saddam meeting last July. Keep in mind, too, that at this point, just a bit more than a week before Iraqi troops marched into Kuwait, Glaspie is speaking under instructions, and the soon-to-be "Butcher of Baghdad" is still "Mr. President."

The transcript has seventeen pages. For the first eight and a half of these, Saddam Hussein orates without interruption. He makes his needs and desires very plain in the matter of Kuwait, adding two things that haven't been noticed in the general dismay over the document. First, he borrows the method of a Coppola godfather to remind Glaspie that the United States has shown sympathy in the near past for his land and oil complaints against Kuwait:

> In 1963 I met with Idriss, the son of Mullah Mustafa Barzani [the Kurdish leader]. He sat in the same seat as you are sitting now. He came asking me to [illegible] implementation of autonomy for Kurdistan, which was agreed on March 11, 1970. My reply was: We are determined to fulfill our obligation. You must have to stick to your agreement.

After carrying on in this vein, and making it clear that Kuwait may go the way of Kurdistan, Saddam closes by saying he hopes that President Bush will read the transcript himself, "and will not leave it in the hands of a gang in the State Department. I exclude the secretary of state and [Assistant Secretary of State John] Kelly, because I know him and I exchanged views with him."

Now, the very first thing that Ambassador Glaspie says, in a recorded discussion that Saddam Hussein has announced he wishes relayed directly to the White House and the non-gang elements at Foggy Bottom, is this:

> I clearly understand your message. We studied history at school. They taught us to say freedom or death. I think you know well that we as a people have our experience with the colonialists.

The confused semiotics of American diplomacy seem to have compelled Glaspie to say that she gets his "message" (or signal) rather than that she simply understands him. But the "message" she conveys in that last sentence is surely as intriguing as the message she receives. She is saying that she realizes (as many Americans are finally beginning to) that one large problem with the anomalous borders of the Gulf is the fact that they were drawn to an obsolete British colonial diagram. That fact has been the essence of Iraq's grudge against Kuwait at least since 1961. For Saddam Hussein, who has been agitating against "the colonialists" for most of his life, the American ambassador's invocation of Patrick Henry in this context had to be more than he hoped for.

But wait. She goes even further to assure him:

> We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait. I was in the American embassy in Kuwait during the late 60s.

> The instruction we had during this period was that we should express no opinion on this issue, and that the issue is not associated with America. *Jam* [illegible] have instructed our friend spokesman to confirm to the instruction. [Italics mine.]

I used [illegible] to know Ambassador Glaspie, who is exactly the type of foreign-service idealist and professional that a man like James Baker does not deserve to have in his employ. Like Saddam, Baker obviously felt more comfortable with John Kelly as head of his Middle East department. And why shouldn't he? Kelly had shown the relevant qualities of sinuous, turncoat adaptability—acting as a "privacy channel" worker for Oliver North while ostensibly U.S. ambassador to Beirut and drawing a public reprimand from George Shultz for double-crossing his department and his undertaking, to say nothing of helping to trade the American hostages in that city. Raw talent of this kind—the man to do business with—evidently does not go unnoticed in either the Bush or Saddam administration.

Baker did not have even the dignity of a Shultz when, appearing on a Sunday morning talk show shortly after the Iraqi invasion, he softly disowned Glaspie by saying that his clear instructions to her in a difficult embassy at a crucial time were among "probably 312,000 cables or so that go out under my name." Throughout the secretary has been as gallant as he has been honest.

The significant detail in Ambassador Glaspie's much more candid post-invasion interview with the *New York Times* was the disclosure that "we never expected they would take all of Kuwait." This will, I hope, remind you that Gary Sick and his Carter team colleagues did not think Iraq would take all of Iran's Khuzistan region. And those with a medium-term grasp of history might recall as well how General Alexander Haig was disconcerted by General Ariel Sharon's 1982 dash beyond the agreed-upon southern portion of Lebanon all the way to Beirut. In the world of real politik there is always the risk that those signaled will see nothing but green lights.

A revised border with Kuwait was

evidently part of the price that
nington had agreed to pay in its
-standing effort to make a pet of
lam Hussein. Yet ever since the
il day when he too greedily took
nington at its word, and the emir
uwait and his extended family
unfeelingly translated from
t people to boat people, Wash-
on has been wattling about the
s of the Kuwaiti (and now, after
ese years, Kurdish) victims. Let
ecord show, via the Glaspie tran-
t, that the Bush administration
a chance to consider these rights
these peoples in advance, and
ly abandoned them.

nd may George Bush someday
rstand that a president cannot
ect a principled call to war—
tages," "Hitler," "ruthless dicta-
"naked aggression"—when mat-
of principle have never been the
for him and his type. On August
ddam Hussein opted out of the
e of nations. He'd had enough. As
old Glaspie:

hese better [U.S.-Iraqi] relations
ve suffered from various rifts. The
rst of these was in 1986, only two
ars after establishing relations, with
hat was known as Irangate, which
ppened during the year that Iran oc-
pied [Iraq's] Fao peninsula.

lam quit the game—he'd had it
tilt and signal—and the Presi-
got so mad he could kill and,
young American men and wom-
s his proxies, be killed.

oday, the tilt is toward Saudi
bia. A huge net of bases and garri-
has been thrown over the King-
of Saud, with a bonanza in
tary sales and a windfall (for
e) in oil prices to accompany it.
s tilt, too, has its destabilizing po-
ial. But the tilt also has its com-
sations, not the least being that
realpoliticians might still get to
the global shots from Washing-
Having taken the diplomatic
l, engineered the UN Security
ncil resolutions, pressured the
dis to let in foreign troops, com-
ted the bulk of these troops, and
blished itself as the only credible
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Continued on page 78

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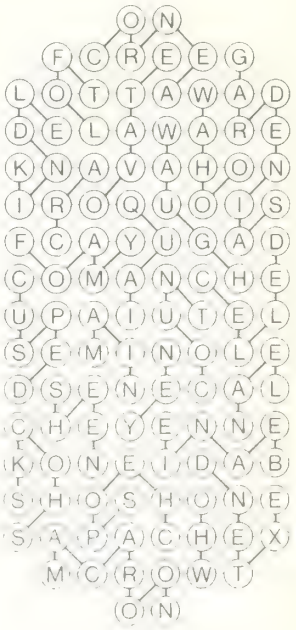
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SOLUTION TO DECEMBER DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 96). (ALFRED, LORD) TENNYSON: THE PASSING OF ARTHUR. Thereat once more he moved about,...and saw, / Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand, / Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King, / Down that long water opening on the deep / Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go/From less to less and vanish into light.

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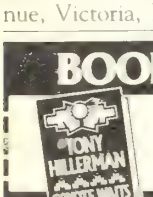
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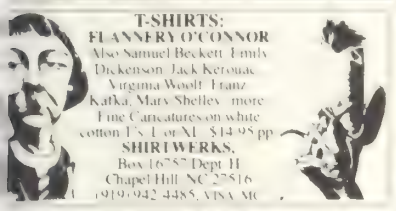
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MISCELLANEOUS

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Continued from page 75

multilateralism. Privately, Washington's realpols gloated: *We* were the superpower—deutsche marks and yen be damned.

Generally, it must be said that realpolitik has been better at dividing than at ruling. Take it as a whole since Kissinger called on the Shah in 1972, and see what the harvest has been. The Kurds have been further dispossessed, further reduced in population, and made the targets of chemical experiments. Perhaps half a million Iraqi and Iranian lives have been expended to no purpose on and around the Fao peninsula. The Iraqis have ingested (or engulfed) Kuwait. The Syrians, aided by an anti-Iraqi subvention from Washington, have now ingested Lebanon. The Israeli millennialists are bent on ingesting the West Bank and Gaza. In every country mentioned, furthermore, the forces of secularism, democracy, and reform have been dealt appalling blows. And all of these crimes and blunders will necessitate future wars.

That is what U.S. policy has done, or helped to do, to the region. What has the same policy done to America? A review of the Pike Commission, the Iran-Contra hearings, even the Tower Report and September's perfunctory House inquiry into the Baker-Kelly-Glaspie fiasco, will disclose the damage done by official lying, by hostage trading, by covert arms sales, by the culture of secrecy, and by the habit of including foreign despots in meetings and decisions that are kept secret from American citizens. The Gulf buildup had by Election Day brought about the renewal of a moribund consensus on national security, the disappearance of the bruited "peace dividend" ("If you're looking for it," one Pentagon official told a reporter this past fall, "it just left for Saudi Arabia"), and the reestablishment of the red alert as the preferred device for communicating between Washington and the people.

The confrontation that opened on the Kuwaiti border in August 1990 was neither the first nor the last battle in a long war, but it was a battle that now directly, overtly involved and engaged the American public and American personnel. The call wa an exercise in peace through streng But the cause was yet another mov the policy of keeping a region divi and embittered, and therefore ac sible to the franchisers of weapo and the owners of black gold.

An earlier regional player, Be min Disraeli, once sarcastically marked that you could tell a w government by its eagerness to re to strong measures. The Bush adm istration uses strong measures to sure weak government abroad and enfeebled democratic government home. The reasoned objection m be that this is a dangerous and disho orable pursuit, in which the weal gamblers have become much too customed to paying their bad de with the blood of others.

January Index Sources

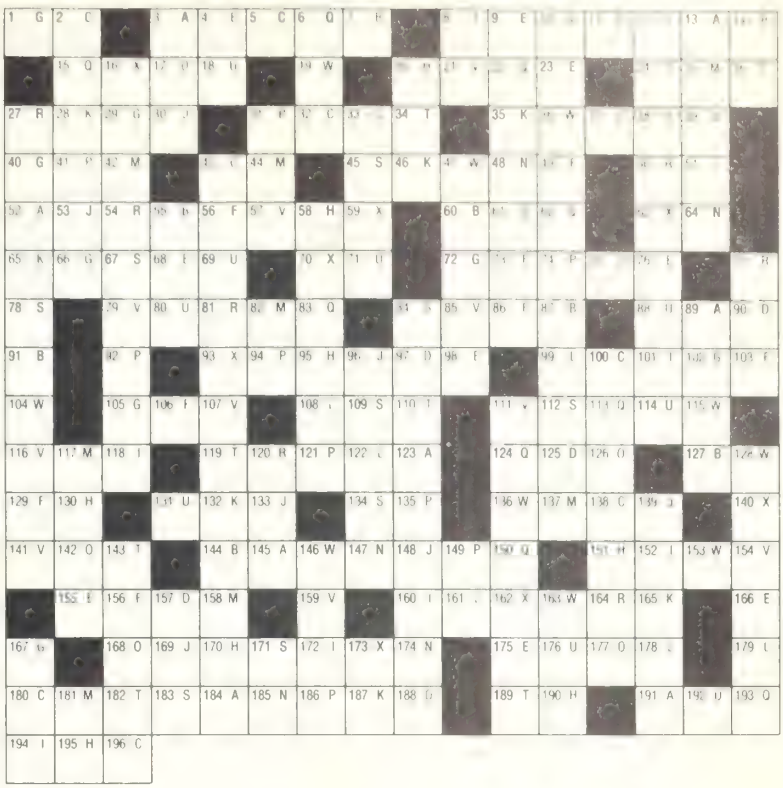
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 97

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: The first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 75.



CLUES

WORDS

A. Careless, slovenly
145 13 89 52 123
3 191 184

B. Pips, doozies, lulus, knockouts
127 91 60 144 7
55 87 14

C. Temporary inactivity; suspension
5 43 180 2 32
196 100 138

D. Extremely venomous snake of SE Asia and Malaysia
90 125 97 11 157

E. Former
68 23 76 175 166 9 155 98
4

F. Appeared to be correct (2 wds.)
86 103 156 56 49 129 106 73

G. Symbolic
167 40 105 12 102 1 37 72
66 29

H. Place of eternal cold, darkness, and fog (Scand. myth.)
130 195 190 170 20 58 95 151

I. Long, narrow cut; fixed routine
194 101 172 152 160 118

J. Expressed grief
148 30 96 53 51 133 169 139

K. "Placed on this ____ of a middle state" (Pope, "Essay on Man")
28 187 65 46 165 132 35

L. Moved about in great numbers
99 108 161 179 178 26 122

M. Leadership, predominance
117 137 181 44 25 158 82 42

N. Vigilantly attentive
147 185 174 48 64

O. Made milder, kinder, more pleasant
188 168 177 142 71 17 61 126
75

P. Brotherly
135 94 41 31 186 121 74 92
149

Q. Principal river of Burma
193 113 6 22 15 124 83 62
150

R. Complete, perfect (2 wds.)
27 120 164 38 54 50 81 77

S. Prim, pedantic woman; prototypical old-time teacher
45 171 109 134 78 33 67 112
183 84

T. Carried off; subtracted (2 wds.)
8 110 189 34 182 119 24 143

U. Of or belonging to the seacoast
[illegible]
114

V. Arrange to achieve a desired effect
[illegible]
159 107 21

W. Of ample size or fullness
[illegible]
163 115

X. Strongly expressive; forceful
[illegible]

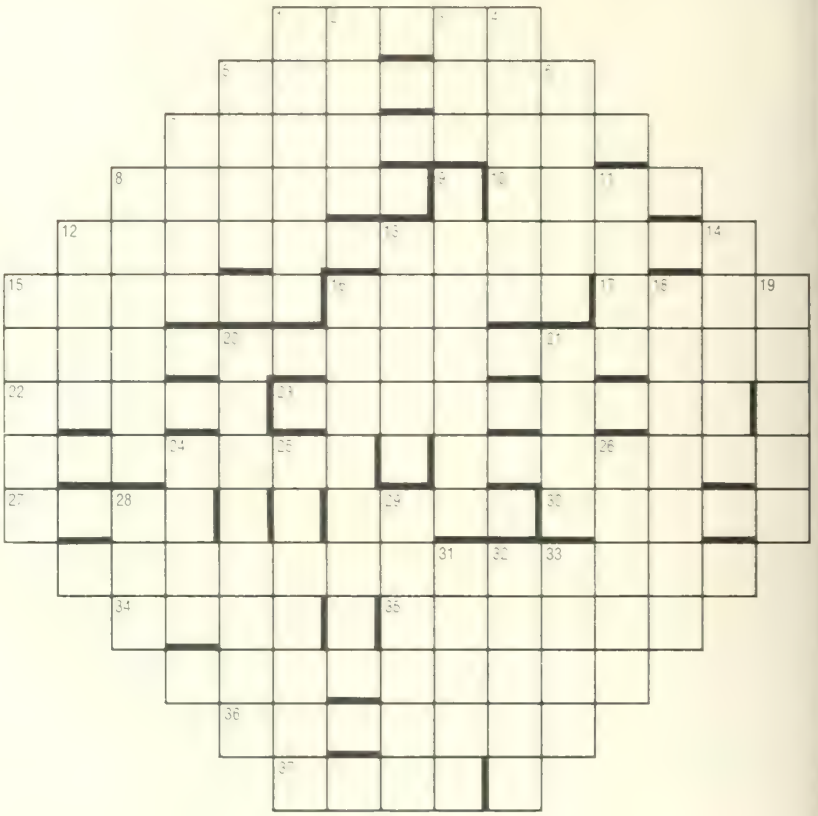
PUZZLE

FAN-cy Free

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.

This puzzle is dedicated to a long-time fan of cryptic crosswords, accounting for the ten unclued entries.

Clue answers include one place name. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 75.



Across

1. Time to get the feel of a felon, (5)
8. Counterbalance jail and most of room in it (6)
10. Former archbishop of Canterbury ignores Latin and summons (4)
15. Don't start imitation in stage scenery— it holds the eye (6)
16. Judge drinks with disreputable women (5)
17. Location with the very best turnover (4)
22. One lament: shortened love affair (5)
23. Riviera's disturbed about true social climber (9)
27. European country backed tour with praise (4)
30. Put up with English clergyman since there's no indication of alternative (5)
34. Impotent, awe-stricken king (4)
35. During legal enactments, these are all relative (6)
36. Go back into Mongols' tents for some cultured food (7)
37. See 13 pence (9 ven) (4)

Down

1. A bit of verse debased Crete, next to Troy (6)
2. Make more effective sweet talk, endlessly (4)
3. Fertile lot cut short (3)
4. Hit below with a high pitch (6)
5. Advance held back by Lord Nelson (4)
6. Evidence of excessive drinking that is seen inside bodies of legislators (5)
7. Catch up on King Arthur (4)
8. Silken covering Chanel has on (6)
9. Hide drably colored, upwardly bound, boring people (7)
11. Terrible shock, almost . . . it could knock out an Englishman (4)
12. Wretched fellow raising rumpus before Mass (4)
13. Magical creature quite properly left out (5)
14. Promises to pay up charge (5)
15. Rig the deck with small rope for hauling sail (5)
18. They commiserate, supporting members maintaining what counts (7)
19. Drunken batter hitting to get in this (5)
20. Disturbed by tart in part of France (8)
21. Associate set back during mediation (4)
24. Every other character leaves drowsier, indicating a venereal disease (4)
25. Kind of computer reprogram posted (and it takes only one K) (7)
26. Feathers covering back of eider duck permanently? (5)
28. Night deposit we had contracted to raise (3)
29. Difficulties saying farewells (6)
31. Way in which people of property show with dropped head . . . (5)
32. . . . many in quiet indolence (5)
33. Hit up for marbles (4)

Contest Rules. Send completed puzzle with name and address to "FAN-cy Free," Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to Harper's, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to Harper's Magazine. Winners' names will be printed in the March issue. Winners of the November 1990 puzzle, "Who's Me Fair?" are Mike Weiss, New Haven, Connecticut; Alan Alberts, New York, New York; and Arthur Filson, Randolph, Massachusetts.

February

Daniel Harris: Sex, Love, and Baby Talk

3 9042 02952491 2

HARPER'S



WHO OWES WHAT TO WHOM?
Drafting a Constitutional Bill of Duties
Christopher Lasch *Benjamin Barber* *Mary Ann Glendon*
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A Palestinian Abroad in the Land of the Free
By Anton Shammas

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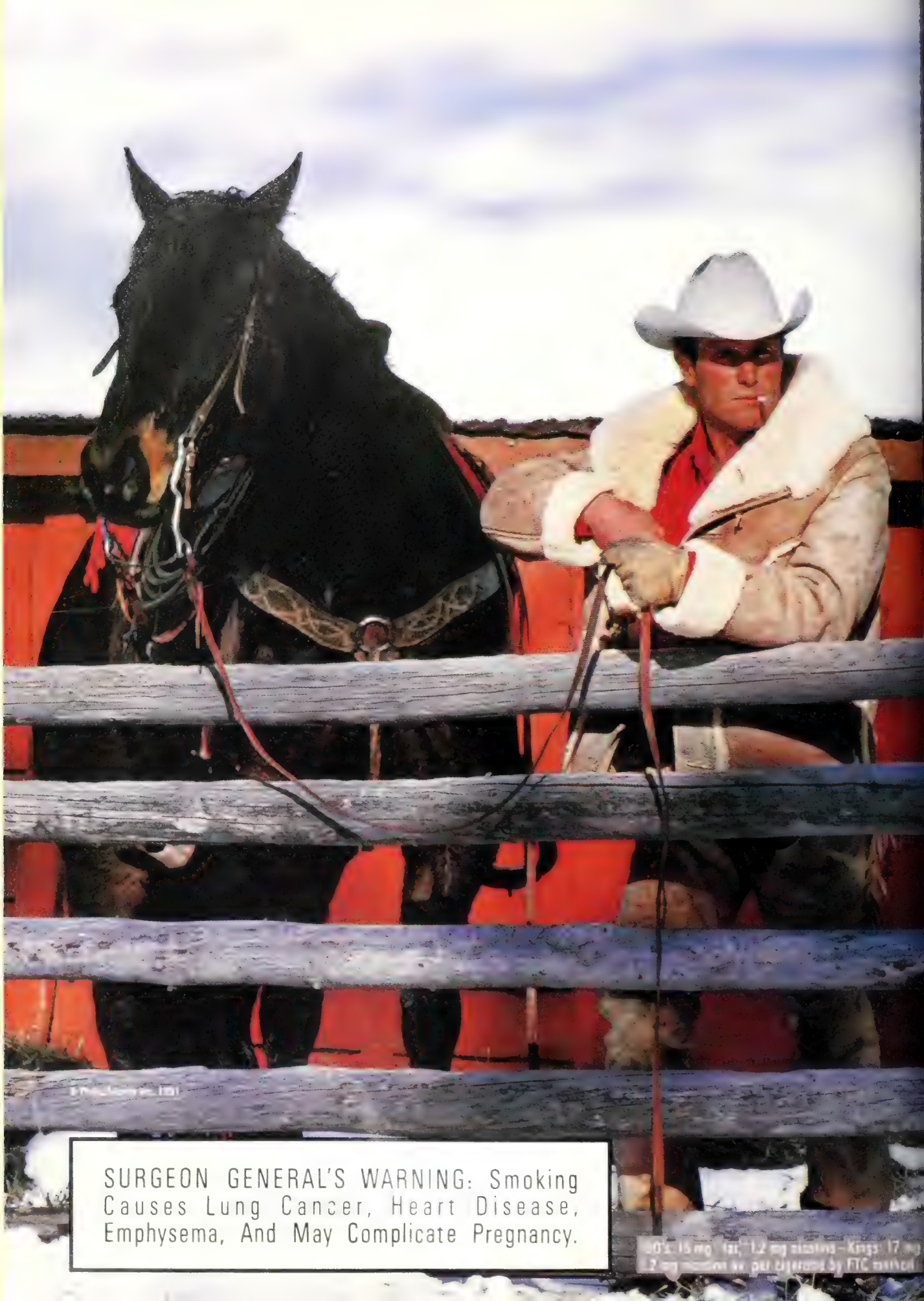
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LETTERS

Decline of Democracy?

Lewis H. Lapham is right ["Democracy in America?" December] when he says that democracy has fallen into disuse. Unfortunately, he described the symptoms—the low voter turnout, the high rate of incumbancy, the violation of constitutional protections, and so on—without diagnosing the sickness. Why has this happened to democracy?

One possible answer is that democracy has been supplanted by capitalism—or, more precisely, by the so-called free market, which is so praised in current American mythology. Capitalism works as an economic system, not as a political system, and that is just what the American people seem to want: a system that works. Democracy is inefficient; capitalism is efficient. Democracy requires debate; capitalism induces problem solving, which is a much quieter process. Democracy asks us to think; capitalism asks only that we apply resources. Democracy is messy; capitalism is clean.

Professional politicians are managers and thus are acceptable to voters, no matter how dissatisfied with them the electorate is. The polls might show an increasing number of people wanting to throw all the bums out, but those same people are basically unwilling to throw out their own representatives. After all, experience in office is considered a qualification. Low voter turnout can thus be understood as consumers exercising their right not to buy a shoddy product.

It began with the best and the brightest of the Kennedy administration who wanted to fine-tune the economy and micromanage Vietnam. This misguided approach exploded with the congressional elections of 1974, the Watergate class that vowed to change the system through good management. Yet it was this same class of politicians that began using target marketing, focus groups, and polling—business-management tools—as political devices, and who provided a market for political consultants and political action committees. This transformation reached a milestone with the so-called Reagan revolution, which raised capitalism to populist ideology and political philosophy.

Today, societal problems are discussed in terms of supply and demand, opportunity costs, and market efficiencies. Improving education, to this way of thinking, requires needs-testing of public funding and even letting parents choose which public schools their children attend. That well-funded schools and students will fare better than underfunded schools and students is irrelevant, because the marketplace is perceived as being efficient, and thus good. Other problems are described in cold economic terms: affordable housing, affordable health care; whether to legalize drugs and let the free market cure that blight. Modern warfare requires efficiency, so the American people do not flinch when Congress lets President Bush threaten

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to get published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed, double-spaced, and include individual acknowledgment.

wage war unconstitutionally. As-
ibling such a huge military force in
: Middle East is permissible because
there to protect our way of life
d: our cheap gasoline. That way of
now has more to do with standards
consumption than with standards
common morality, more with pri-
ization than with public duty—
ain, more with capitalism than with
mocracy.

nes R. Showalter
oria, Ariz.

After reading Lewis H. Lapham's
ay, I winced. Like many Ameri-
ns today, I regularly make futile
empts to express my faith in de-
ocracy at the voting booth, but
iat good is it going to do? Democra-
in its purest sense is a way of daily
e that has been undermined by what
ould be called the Corporate State.
a hundred years, America has un-
rgone a profound and qualitative
shift in the nature of its basic power structure, and this shift is catching up with us in ever more insidious ways. The apparent political power in 1990s America is only a reflection of the needs and interests of a structural arrangement that is unresponsive to its citizenry.

Even a third-grader could digest the notion that the United States of America is composed of hundreds of smaller "states" called corporations, many of them extraordinarily powerful, none of them democratic. In this light, it should be noted that what goes on inside each of these "states" has the power to affect the lives and the moral behavior of its employees in ways far more profound than any large-scale government program ever has or ever will.

For example, I once noticed that the moment I walked through the door of the corporation where I used to work, I found myself somewhat compelled to forgo my right to free speech for eight hours each day. Sure, I could criticize national politicians until I was blue in the face. But call into question the wisdom of the firm's shareholders and I risked termination. From what I understand, this is the conventional wisdom that prevails among corporate employees in America, the land of the free and the home of the extremely rarely brave. Most people put up and shut up. The need for domestic tranquillity, in a world of material distractions and precarious economic standards that raise the stakes almost too high to bear the burden of democracy, almost always overshadows what once was considered essentially American: dignity. If an astute statistician were to secretly canvass the millions of corporate employees in the country, he or she would find that the gut-level will of the employees who serve corporate America is widely at variance with that of the "official" corporate agenda.

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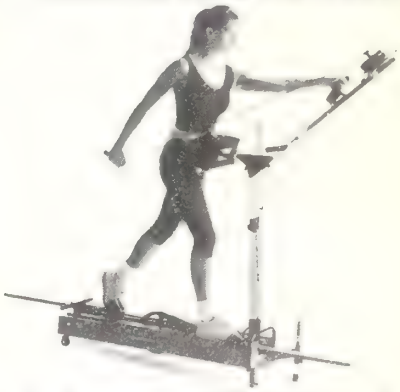
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Broaden the implications into te
political realm and the question o
resources arises. Hence, we have wa
that stimulate the business sector r
that protect business interests, a ph
nomenon that occurred in Vietna
and appears about to happen in t
Persian Gulf.

And our politicians? It should
clear to almost everyone that the
(mostly) men are agents of the corp
rate states to which they belong,
means of which they first gained po
er. They belong, in other words, to
closed system into which democra
in America has fallen. No longer
political representation a question
the acquisition of power; it's now
matter of *relocation* of power, and th
rest of us seem to have been silence
Why is it any wonder, then, that
many feel shut out of the politic
process when the men who represe
them are the same ones who eith
will not allow their employees
wholeheartedly participate in it (ar
thereby put into action their mor
values in the practical world) or refu
to take the human rights of the
"wards" seriously? Since political re
resentatives must first have appr
priated power before they are granted
by votes, the entitlement of repr
senting the people, we must loo
again at the basis of the power struc
ture—if we are to diagnose its ult
mate manifestations.

As an employee of one of America
top twenty-five law firms, I hav
witnessed extraordinary abuses. A
though others privately complaine
and agreed with my criticisms, th
snarling acts of violence against th
sanctity of the Constitution to whic
we were subjected were, almost to th
man, accepted. That's the way it is
Corporate loyalty or else.

Several of these breachers of the so
cial contract are very likely to run fo
public office sooner or later. Smilin
into the cameras, they will seem un
commonly good.

Gordon Hilgers
Dallas

To Lewis H. Lapham and hi
thoughts on democracy I give a rasp
berry, for saddling democracy with
such broad, unwarranted pretensions

National democracy" is a well-tended oxymoron, an idea that n't decay because it was never eant to live in the fashion Lapham ngingly describes. National politics e by nature entirely removed from e sphere of everyday life, and few ould demand a new round of terference.

Lapham presents, in order to re-te, four common proofs that Ameri-n democracy is alive and well: the le of the ballot box; operation and vnership of the state by its citizens; ie separation of powers and system of ecks and balances; and the guaran-ed liberties under the Constitution. t these four straw men, which he ndily burns to a cynical crisp, are ntiquated and uninspired. Ameri-ns have long since abdicated self-overnment on a national scale to the alm of politicians. The most high-inded citizens ask only that their oices be heard around the block, not round the country. Municipalities e democracy's real proving ground. Indeed, if Lapham wishes to test emocratic ideals against practice, his rena should be more intimate, more miliar. Perhaps his final judgment ould remain. But the truest measure democracy's pulse and spirit is tak-n in the school, the family, the orkplace, the neighborhood. De-ocracy has never breathed beyond ese boundaries.

obert N. Morris
ew Bedford, Mass.

Democracy in America? It's only ie folks with the money and/or the ins who ever use the word "democ-cy" and think that they mean it. It's justification to them. Go ahead. Try take them up on it. The meaning of . The MEANING of it. See just how uickly the money and the guns come pounding at that flimsy little door.

As I write this, the sun has barely ome up. There's a police siren blar-g through my open window. Some-ne less than honorable (i.e., poor) anted something he could not buy. ame sad story.

Lapham seems to forget that de-ocracy has always been the fiction romulgated in this land. This gov-rnment has never been republican.

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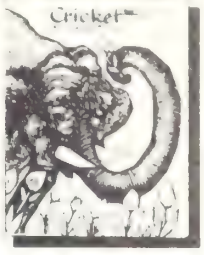
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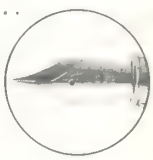
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So? The bulk of the American citizenry does exactly what the powerless, the peasant, the *campesino*, have done throughout history—hunker down in the hovel, now comfortably bilevel and well-appointed, and dream of something better for the children. Dreams of the next world. Maybe that's why people have not stopped going to church.

But that's all well and good, see. The ubiquitous Them really don't want Us involved anyway. If we get involved, we may start asking for things: decent health care, civil rights, respectable wages, constitutional protections, real education. But, of course, in a $5-trillion-a-year economy there is simply not enough money for these silly pipe dreams.

Your missing voters, your lack of democracy, are no mistake. There is no accident. When everyone in the popular press tells these hapless woebegones that Americans have never before seen such prosperity, such a tremendously sustained growth in the economy, those of us in that 53.6 percent of American workers who were audacious enough to turn in tax returns reporting that we made less than $20,000 a year in that auspicious go-go decade can only hang our heads in shame for the failures that we are. Somehow we missed the rising tide that was supposed to have lifted all the boats. Seems that there were some of us still in up to our necks when all the life preservers were hauled back up. Please adjust for inflation, if you will, that tawdry $20,000 that more than half of us managed to eke out last year. Adjust it back to the year, the day, the hour, that Reagan actually could bring himself to ask, "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?"

Lapham's harangue is fun. But there still is no one standing at the intersections pointing the people in the right direction. Their milling about is acute, painful. The cry goes up when the banner is raised to throw the hypocritical rascals out, only to be replaced by shrugs when no one can decide to let the other hypocritical rascals in. These people have not failed the test of democracy. It is they who have lived the consequences of the demise of American manufacturing prowess. It is not they who have let Lapham down. They fought the good fight against the men from Mammon, and they lost.

J. A. Hardwick
Chicago

In his essay, Lewis H. Lapham refers to Ronald Reagan's summer visit to Berlin to conduct "a seminar for the East Germans on the theory and practice of democracy." I am reminded that there is nothing so rich in irony as modern history, exemplified by the image of our former beloved president lecturing the newly freed citizens of Eastern Europe on the techniques and virtues of democratic government. As Lapham indicates, the fact remains that Ronald Reagan bankrupted America, ignored the Constitution, increased the nation's oil dependency, decreased conservation efforts, hailed business and government criminals as national heroes, financed death squads in Central America, invaded and lied about Grenada, joked about bombing Moscow, traded weapons for hostages, never mentioned the S&L crisis, oversaw an explosion of crime and homelessness on the nation's streets, and rode off into the sunset a rich and comfortable man surrounded by a halo of deniability. Now he tours the world, is greeted as a model of statesmanship, and lectures others on the meaning of liberty and justice for all. The irony is almost more than I can bear.

To the extent that we increasingly embody, to use Lapham's image, "government as . . . automatic vending machine," we are indeed a nation at risk. In addition to politicians for hire, the degradation of the democratic process is starkly illustrated in the practice of politics by buzzword. Lapham describes the alternative when he asserts that "a democracy in sound working order presupposes ground of tolerance, in Judge Learned Hand's phrase, 'the spirit which is not too sure that it is right.' I might think that the other fellow is wrong, but I do not think that he is therefore wicked." In the shadow of the question mark at the end of the title of Lapham's essay linger the words of Thomas Jefferson: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just."

Stefan Schindler
Arlington, Mass.

For the last fourteen years, I have taught philosophy and critical thinking to California community-college students. Lewis H. Lapham's essay describes well the cynicism and apathy toward politics that I see in my students and my colleagues. Lapham attributes much of this recent cynicism to the myriad corruptions of the Reagan administration.

The Reagan administration certainly didn't help. Most of my students, however, are not disgusted, or even disappointed, by the corruption and stupidity of contemporary political figures. Indeed, they literally cannot see what all the fuss is about. I blame this partly on their teachers, who applaud the trendy infusion of social-science jargon into public discourse and public education.

My students are educated in "tolerance" and "self-esteem." They tell me that kindergarten through twelfth-grade classroom activities in social studies and English are often designed to impart feelings (not thinking). Role-playing exercises are very popular. In role-playing, everyone is assumed to "be okay," and the expression of any and all feelings is encouraged. It is unacceptable to judge or to criticize. Facts are important only insofar as they affect feelings. The role of the group is to be supportive and accepting. And, of course, at the end of the session everyone is supposed to *feel* good.

The consequences of such educational methods are interesting. My students would never think of making a racist or sexist remark in class. They know those attitudes are not cool. My students are generally extremely *nice* people—they don't express much an-

, and they are surprisingly sophisti-
ed when it comes to resolving
erpersonal conflict. (They general-
hold jobs in the service sector: at
sneyland, at the mall, at McDon-
's. Not surprisingly, if they fail to
"nice," they lose their jobs.)
I have my work cut out for me,
wever, in trying to teach these
dents critical thinking. I frequent-
encounter two very revealing re-
onses to that enterprise: (1)
hinking critically means criticiz-
g, but it's not nice to criticize"—
., according to role-playing rules,
ticizing is bad manners and invali-
tes another's feelings; (2) "There
only feelings"—i.e., nothing is
e, there are only opinions; but
inions are just feelings, and you
n't argue with someone's feelings.
This nothing-is-true epistemology
quite superficial and probably inco-
rent ("Are you saying it's *true* that
thing is true?"). But it's hard to
ck twelve years of indoctrination in
is sort of twaddle, and even harder
hen the students hear it reinforced
ily in some of their college social
udies and literature classes.
Let me emphasize that my students,
ough sometimes breathtakingly ig-
orant, are generally *not* stupid or
zy. They understand the concepts of
ctual and logical error, and they
cognize fallacies perfectly well.
hey "learn the material"; they just
ouldn't dream of using it. They un-
erstand the lesson, but they've inter-
alized an insidious meta-lesson:
eling is more important than
inking.
Thus we may understand why they
on't vote and are mostly silent about
he issues that in the Sixties enraged
he young: injustice, class, and race.
hey tolerate outrageous violations of
heir own civil liberties. Also, need-
ss to say, they tolerate outrageously
nreasonable views—creationism,
strology, crystal power, channeling,
tc. These views make people feel
ood; and feeling good is the point,
fter all, isn't it? Indeed, I find that
ny students will argue confidently
nd passionately for only one thing:
he right to believe whatever one
leases. Too bad it's a moot point.
As Lapham reminds us, democracy
equires that people make reasoned

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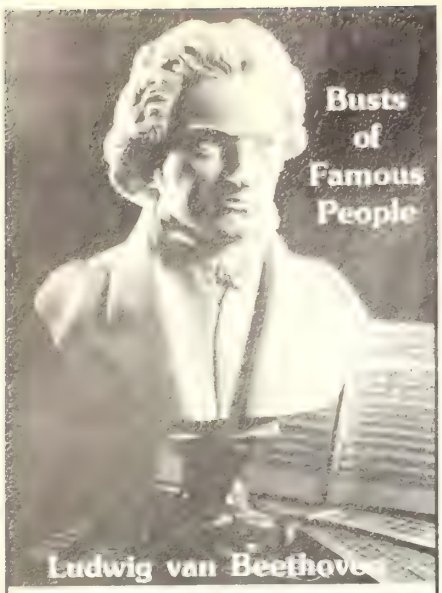
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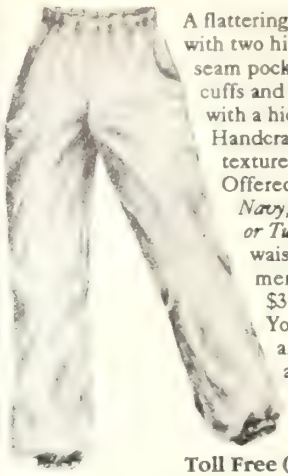
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judgments, that they evaluate crit cally what others say. In the grou therapy model of social interaction have described, one doesn't judge all. So it's not that my students we once interested in politics and no are turned off; the vast majority hav *never* been interested in politics. Ho could they be? For most of them, arg ment is a social and intellectual fau pas. Argument requires that one be in Lapham's words, "skeptical an contentious." For my students, thes two words don't indicate the mind-se of an engaged citizen; instead, the pretty well sum up the personality o an "asshole."

Sandra A. LaFave
West Valley College
Saratoga, Calif.

The Color of Pretentiousness

Thank you for publishing the list o colors available in the fall 199 Tweeds mail-order clothing catalogu [Readings, November], a list tha transforms basic brown into "buffa lo," dark purple into "raisin," dark golden yellow into "squash," maroon into "sanguine," and so on. Reading these confected mood labels, I was re minded of Paul Fussell's words in his book *Class*. In matters of verbal and written expression, he says: "It's the middle-class quest for grandeur and gentility that produces the most inter esting effects." Fussell adds, "Adver tising diction feeds so smoothly into the middle-class psyche because of that class's bent toward rhetorical fake elegance." An admitted cata logue junkie, I have long found the color-naming in the Tweeds cata logue irksome and preposterous (al though Tweeds is certainly not the only offender). How do the mail order catalogue companies think they *help* shoppers by creating color names that no one will understand?

There is only one action that the mail-order customer can take: I will write them on my finest stationery, proposing a new color. It will be called "pretentious" and described as "completely unnatural and murky/ transparent and dull."

Kristin van Ogtrop
New York City

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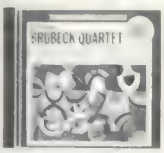
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NOTEBOOK

Opening the mail

By Lewis H. Lapham

America remains democratic, not in the literal sense of being a democracy, but in the moral sense of consisting of democrats.

—G. K. Chesterton

Last November in *Harper's Magazine* I published an essay decrying the palsied condition of the American democracy, and within a matter of days I was overwhelmed with letters to the editor taking me to task not for my pessimism but for my naïveté and my romanticism. Few essays published in the magazine during the last two or three years have prompted so many interjections and further remarks, and at the end of a week I had enough text to make a short but instructive book. I read the letters with delight. Not only were they strongly phrased and free of cant, they confirmed Chesterton's distinction between the moral and literal meanings of democracy. None of the correspondents believed that the United States could be fairly described (not now, not in 1910 or 1826) as a textbook democracy. They chided me for being so foolish as to suppose that at some idyllic moment in the historical past the Americans ever had matched the ideal theory of democracy with a practice that was mercifully corrupt. And yet, again without exception, all the correspondents construed themselves as democrats, reserving the right to say what they thought, objecting, as much on instinct as on principle, to any encroachment on their liberties. They regarded the professional politician as what Paul Johnson once called "the great human scourge of the 20th Century," and they informed me that the republic always stands at risk, that its enemies, who are many and well fed, always ally themselves with more or less the same mob of selfish fears—with the pride of the rich and the envy of the poor, with the insolence of office and the wish for kings. Never mind, they said; the country has survived the violence of thieves and the teaching of fools, and it is only our ignorance of history that makes it so easy for us to vilify our own age.

A correspondent in Keokuk, Iowa—R. G. (Buck) Buchannan, news director of KOKX radio—sent a revised draft of the Constitution that the Congress might well consider passing into law; seventeen students of senior English at the Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts sent a series of ripostes composed on assignment; John Colby Ney, the editor of *Collapse Watch*, an obscure and presumably anarchist journal committed to the acceleration of America's inevitable decline, cited, as proof of his thesis, T. S. Eliot's remark to D. H. Lawrence: "One can hardly have the phoenix without the ashes, can one?"

If a majority of the correspondents thought it absurd to expect that genuinely democratic government could promote the interests of a nation-state, possibly this was because so many of them had served on city councils and district school boards, as trustees of hospitals, or salt marshes, or museums. Their letters bore witness to what they had seen and heard in Rockport, Maine, and Perkins, Oklahoma; in El Toro, California, and Warren, Ohio, and Sparks, Nevada. They reminded me that democratic government proves itself effective only in the smaller theaters of operation, a point succinctly put by Robert Morris of New Bedford, Massachusetts (letter, page 6).

The sketchiness of the mail from Washington, D.C. (two letters and a postcard), sustained my impression of that city as the last outpost of the nineteenth-century British Empire. The uses of democracy (as opposed to the slogans of democracy) require the presence of fellow citizens who know enough and care enough about a common concern to argue about a water right or a fourth-grade English text, and in Washington I find functionaries instead of citizens. Maybe I have been unfortunate in my acquaintance, but in Washington I'm accustomed to listening to the mumble of abstractions, to policy intellectuals and under deputy secretaries who never permit themselves the luxury of an impolitic opinion. Their ambition tailors their thought to the prevailing political truth, and they cannot afford the practice of democracy because they might find themselves declared *persona non grata* by the public-opinion polls.

The correspondents in Keokuk and Warren and Sparks understood democracy as a habit of mind necessarily at odds with the grand designs of the nation-state. The state defines power as the power inherent in things, and the people define power as the power inherent in dreams. To say that America is both a liberal democracy and a nation-state is to say that the American eagle is both a bird and a fish. As the reasons of state gradually supersede the wishes and the interests of the people, the government increasingly must rely on subterfuge and the suppression of any opinion that contradicts the wisdom in office. The government may not wish to make the adjustments, but it has no choice in the matter. The larger a nation's sway and ambit in the world, the more likely that it will be obliged to abandon its principles. Troubled officials

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sometimes refer to what they call "the unhappy paradox" implicit in the waging of secret or undeclared war under the jurisdiction of a free, open, and democractic society. Their embarrassment doesn't prevent the substitution of palace intrigue for candid debate or the preference, at least in official circles, for the virtue of loyalty as opposed to the spirit of liberty.

Both James R. Showalter of Peoria, Arizona (letter, page 4), and Gordon Hilgers of Dallas, Texas (letter, page 5), well understood the transmigration of the soul of the old American republic into the body of the new and improved American state. Hilger's comparison of the modern business corporation with a despotic city-state corresponds to my own observation. The larger corporations (Citicorp, Mobil Corporation, etc.) employ at least as many people as lived in Renaissance Florence or medieval Venice, and among the happy few who attain degrees of rank within the hierarchy, I have noticed the attributes of the accomplished courtiers. They laugh on cue and never neglect to marvel at the chairman's sagacity. When summoned to attend the ceremonies of the annual board meeting or quail hunt, they reflect the mood of authority as accurately as the still surfaces of an ornamental pond. The air of subservience remains constant throughout the whole honeycomb of the American oligarchy, a smiling and bowing attitude of mind as much in evidence at a television network or a newsmagazine as at an automobile company or a bank.

I also find persuasive Showalter's distinction between democracy and capitalism, two words that most Americans (George Bush not least among them) tend to regard as synonyms. The media ceaselessly compound the confusion, equating politics with economics and referring the customers, for social justice, to the notions counter in what they regard as the great, good American department store. Ever since the advent of President Ronald Reagan, I've noticed that even *soi-disant* leftist intellectuals think of themselves as cris managers. As recently as last Septer ber, while passing a slow afternoon a train between Baltimore and Ne York, I attempted to explain to young entrepreneur (the owner, as remember, of four beachfront motel that capitalism wasn't a political ide that Nazi Germany endorsed the ca italist virtues, and that had Sadda Hussein submitted his acquisitio policy to the Harvard Business Scho or the First Boston Corporation, h undoubtedly would have been co gratulated for his aggressiveness ar his search for excellence. The you man had considerable difficulty wit the separation of his faith into i component parts, and on the wa through Philadelphia I remember asl ing him what he thought was mea by the all-American phrase "G for it."

Although most of the letters to th editor expressed varying degrees skepticism about the outward and o ficial forms of democracy, the autho retained their faith in the inward an

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ıofficial expression of the democrat- spirit, and it was on behalf of their ıpe for the best that they sent their rrections and amendments. A num- r of them, however, found fault th my failure to recommend a urse of action. Easy enough, they id, to make dismal remarks about a stem so obviously inept, but what ıuld you, in fact, *do*?

I never know how to answer that ıestion. I consider myself an editor accident and a writer by design, ıd I regard neither profession as be- g especially congenial to the will to ıwer. I would rather say what I think ın go to dinner with Ted Koppel or lexander Haig, and, for the sake of ı apt phrase, I've lost, more than ıce, the chance of a fellowship or undation grant.

That much having been said, and the unlikely circumstance that I und myself standing for an election, would rely on the precept that in a emocracy the first question is not Who is the best ruler?" but rather Which ruler can do the least harm?" is the law that must take notice of eedom, not, as in a military dictator- ıip or a jail, freedom that must take otice of the law. Believing that it n't the business of the state to im- ose on the citizenry a system of moral elief or spiritual practice, I would re- cind or greatly modify (citing the uthority of the Ninth Amendment: The enumeration in the Constitu- on, of certain rights, shall not be onstrued to deny or disparage others etained by the people") most of the ıws of prohibition—on gambling, ude bathing, the use of drugs and the arrying of guns, pornography, prosti- ution, free speech (in all forms), bortion, polygamy or polyandry, ab- rrant religious beliefs, the habits of onduct, dress, and deportment.

Given the further premise that de- nocracy, by definition, is both an ex- eriment and an inefficient mess, and iven also enough time and the advice f wiser counselors, I might attempt a rogram of political illumination live- y enough to enlist the enthusiasm of Robert Leonard of Roseville, Minne- ota. Leonard replied to my Novem- er essay by describing his rediscovery f Tom Paine's admonition to the ef- ect that "we have it in our power to



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In July of last year, on his way to Spokane, Washington, Leonard and his wife stopped for the night in Bismarck, North Dakota, and on the grounds of the capitol building he discovered in progress a performance of "The American Visions Chautauqua." A company of local history professors dressed in period costumes, as Alexander Hamilton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Henry Adams, et al., was presenting selected scenes from American history, reviving, for one another, as well as for the crowd on the lawn, the language of American democracy.

"What a delight!" Leonard wrote. "What an interesting and engaging way to learn, to be an active participant in a public discussion and debate—in the free-flowing atmosphere in a summer evening under a tent."

In an analogous spirit of free-flowing summer, and with the intention of opening a conversation rather than enforcing a regimen of discipline, I would put as many questions as possible to national referenda. Why not institute different means of government in different spheres of interest? The variants of democracy in those smaller jurisdictions (village, county, town, city, state) in which debate remains both effective and possible, and a federal jurisdiction, much reduced in size and authority, somehow reconstructed as a public utility or an international trading corporation. Why not an income tax that must be explained on no more than four pages of a government form? Why not nominate prospective candidates for Congress by lot, the names to be drawn from a list of candidates familiar with the rudiments of American history and at least five or six of the primary American political texts? The nominees would be required to show sufficient degrees of interest, knowledge, and competence. Properly speaking, they wouldn't be politicians, and so they could be excused from the need to raise campaign money or trim their votes to the trends of the next election. Why not a period of national service (chiefly in the civilian sectors of the society) for any and all individuals (both domestic and foreign) who wish to hold government office?

With respect to the conduct of th nation's wars, I would make it a ru that no bureaucrat or intellectu mercenary should write weapons po cy or act in an advisory capacity to th White House, Defense Departmen or National Security Council witho a month's prior service in a war, a p lice precinct, a public hospital, or city morgue. The authors of the hig er strategy also must have had occ sion, at least once in their lives, inform the next of kin of a death in family.

In the matter of the government obligation to the arts, I would lim the subsidies to well-established inst tutions—the National Gallery, th Metropolitan Museum, the New Yor Philharmonic—but on the conditio that the subsidies be extravagan enough to maintain the institution i a state of easy affluence. Excused fro the ignominy of perpetually beggin for coins, the institutions could fi their attention on art instead of mor ey. The shift in sensibility woul improve the quality of both th management and the exhibits. No in stitution accepting a subsidy could so licit funds, charge admission, or set u markets in posters, toys, and scente candles.

Given another few thousan words, possibly I could come up wit further questions, which, with an luck, might encourage more practica people to break the habits of the ol and draw the blueprints of the new Probably I am too much of a roman tic, not nearly cynical enough t welcome Mr. Ney's forthcoming col lapse, but so also is democracy a ro mantic idea, a thing of the spirit an the mind and by no means easy to sus tain. More often than not it fails, as i did in Europe between 1920 and 194 in Italy, Turkey, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Yugosla via, Hungary, Albania, Poland, Esto nia, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Germany.

"A republic," said Franklin, "if you can keep it"; and as has been often said and often proved, democracy is never orderly or aesthetic or quiet or efficient, but it is the form of government that best preserves the spirit of liberty. ■

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Some say the secret to the popularity of Ballantine's Finest Scotch is its artful blend of 42 single malt whiskies. Others proclaim the virtues of water, peat or heather, traces of which can be detected in every sip. But all discussions about Scotch must ultimately turn to the oak barrels in which it matures.

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VOLVO

HARPER'S INDEX

Ratio of the number of corporate bonds that Moody's downgraded in 1990 to the number it upgraded : 4:1
Ratio in 1984 : 1:1
Ratio of the average CEO's salary to that of a blue collar worker in 1980 : 25:1
Ratio today : 91:1
Number of years since 1980 in which increases in blue-collar wages have failed to keep up with inflation : 8
Percentage change, in the last year, in the number of home-equity loans made by American banks : +26
Percentage of U.S. firms with fewer than 100 workers that paid all employee health insurance premiums in 1980 : 72
Percentage that do today : 48
Percentage increase, since 1989, in the number of alcohol-related hospitalizations of Boston College students : 100
Convicted drunk drivers in Orange County, California, since 1988, whose sentence included a tour of the morgue : 569
Number of repeat offenders among them : 1
Projected average speed of cars on California's highways in the year 2010, in miles per hour : 11
Maximum speed of a hockey puck in an NHL game, in miles per hour : 96
Minimum amount of time it takes a human sperm to reach an egg, in minutes : 5
Estimated portion of all pregnancies ending in abortion that are the result of contraceptive failure : 1/2
Price of one Homeboy Condom, from Custom Condoms of Somerville, Massachusetts : $1.50
Number of black men in New York state correctional facilities : 24,000
Number enrolled in New York state colleges or universities : 23,000
Number of months Nikita Khrushchev's son, Sergei, spent as a fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics last fall : 3
Number of Soviet Army officers in Siberia who are assigned full-time to locating deserters : 100
Chances that an Iraqi male between the ages of 15 and 39 is a soldier : 1 in 3
Percentage of the recruitment ads for the U.S. military broadcast since the Iraqi invasion that include combat scenes : 57
Percentage of the ads broadcast before the invasion that did : 0
Percentage change, between August 1989 and August 1990, in U.S. Army enlistment : −38
Number of times that the U.S. Congress has declared war : 5
Estimated number of times that a U.S. president has sent troops into combat situations : 130
Estimated number of times last fall that George Bush told a joke about his dog asking for a wine list with her Alpo : 10
Percentage of Americans who say, "I can't tell a joke to save my life" : 99.2
Percentage of preschool children who say that if they were president they would eat ice cream for every meal : 21
Rank of Mr. Rogers, among preschoolers' first choices for president of the United States : 1
Rank of Richard Gephardt, among Iowans' first choices for the 1992 Democratic presidential nomination : 1
Rank of Abraham Lincoln, among the U.S. presidents most often portrayed in films : 1
Number of false noses used by Gérard Depardieu during the filming of *Cyrano de Bergerac* : 100
Average size bra worn by an American woman in 1985 : 34B
Average size today : 36C
Percentage increase in pressure on the ball of the foot exerted by walking in a shoe with a three-inch heel : 76
Rank of "acting," "happiness," and "modeling," among ambitions most often cited by *Playboy* centerfold models : 1,2,3
Rank of "honey," among Americans' favorite terms of endearment : 1 (see page 22)
Minimum cost of a personalized romance novel, from Swan Publishing of Placentia, California : $45 (see page 23)
Percentage of all valentines that are sent by women : 85

Figures cited are the latest available as of December 1990. Sources are listed on page 96.
"Harper's Index" is a registered trademark.

READINGS

[Essay]

BABY TALK DECONSTRUCTED AND DEFENDED

From "Baby Talk," by Daniel Harris, in the twenty-fifth-anniversary issue of Salmagundi, *a quarterly published by Skidmore College. Harris lives in San Francisco.*

Although I can't remember where she said it (or indeed *if* she said it), I attribute to Mary McCarthy a withering blast against baby talk between lovers that has haunted my own intense and fetishistic practice as a fugitive baby talker ever since. It was a contemptuous and dismissive comment that is forever lurking in the peripheral vision of my love life, where it keeps grim and disapproving company with another bitter appraisal by a friend: "You really know that things have gone to hell when you find yourself lapsing into baby talk with your lover." At the time he said this, I enthusiastically (and disingenuously) agreed, all the while fully aware of both the importance of baby talk in my own mating rituals and my complete and utter unwillingness to discontinue it despite the fact that it has fallen into such disfavor in contemporary sexual politics. I offer the following remarks on this humiliating romantic taboo neither to appease my own critics, who insist that lovers should court as adults, nor to exorcise my own demons, but simply to draw attention to the paramount importance of baby talk in the modern relationship and the vital, if insipid, role it plays in sustaining intimacy.

In an age in which people feel free to air every vice and personal failing before perfect strangers in casual and public situations, baby talk remains something about which the most immodest nurturer of interpersonal relationships is ashamed. Only in the most intimate situations in the most well-guarded whispers will we relax our injunctions against this last and most persistent of sexual prohibitions, so tenacious for an era in which secrets seem to exist for the purpose of their disclosure and in which everything from alcoholism to incest has found its own public forum where the transgressor can confess and be shriven. Intense, titillating shame accompanies it, so that it is easier to admit to any other sort of fetishism—sadomasochism, coprophilia, transvestism—than to take a forthright stance on one's own self-abasing activities as a baby talker.

The emotional background of this embarrassment is, of course, the evolving realpolitik of contemporary relationships—the new emphasis on maturity, equality, and independence nurtured by both feminism and the human-potential and self-help movements. The latter in particular have launched a vigorous critique of that faddish syndrome "co-dependence," whether the dependence in question is on drugs, alcohol, or romance. In the midst of these reassessments of sexual intimacy, baby talk is an unwelcome testament to the persistence of old romantic habits, which ultimately thwart our efforts to modify our behavior in accordance with new ideas about the "correct" style of deportment in love. Even those of us who have taken the lessons of the sexual revolution, feminism, and gay liberation to heart are troubled by this stark reminder in our own behavior of a less sexually mature age, this lingering vestige of a callow period before the "enlightenment" in which lovers brought to their relationships little guilt, less intelligence, and none of the ideology that we presently bring to bear on our romantic fantasies.



om a series of photographs by Tatsumi Orimoto exhibited last fall at Galleric Berndt + Krips in Cologne, Germany. For this series, Orimoto convinced strangers on the streets of Benares, India, to pose for n while wearing "ear tags" he provided. Orimoto says he seeks to document human interaction, and he is found that one person pulling on the ear of another is a particularly "beautiful" and "eventful" kind of teraction. The words printed on the ear tags vary, but they are always in English. According to the artist, ey are chosen for their simplicity and universality. Orimoto lives in Kawasaki, Japan.

Indeed, baby talk is a repository of reactionary beliefs about love—the place into which we have swept all of our sentimental fondness for dependence and helplessness. It is one of the last strongholds of our culture's view of relationships as utterly disarming emotional experiences of such stormy irrationality that they reduce us to children. As we perform the rituals of baby talk—its personification and subsequent naming of parts of the body (penises, vaginas, feetsies, piggies), its narratives involving imaginary characters, its ingenious if esoteric scripting and plotting—we live out fantasies of total helplessness and likewise of total parental control, for baby talk almost invariably presumes not two children but an adult and a child, two mutually exclusive but interchangeable roles. Given the intense pleasure we take from these roles, it is even fair to wonder if some sort of dialectic hasn't been established in our culture between these closet costume dramas (in which we use childishness to intensify intimacy) and the new mandate for maturity and independence. The more we are told that the ecstatic helplessness we have come to expect from love and the innocuous theater we use to dramatize this helplessness are both a violation of taste and politically in bad form, the more exciting they become, the more illicit, the more jealously protected from exposure to the judgmental modern world, and therefore the more pleasurable and intimate.

Aside from giving free rein to conservative notions of submission, surrender, and obedience, baby talk reflects something of our culture's complex attitude toward children. For many (certainly not all) practitioners, it is, strangely enough, an aphrodisiac, a prelude to sex, a form of foreplay at once banal and bizarre, that seems natural, even cozy, to lovers when the heat is on but that is nonetheless almost indecent—if we stop to think about it (which we never do)—in light of society's sensitivity to the molestation of children. The somewhat imbecilic infantilism we lapse into and out of as the occasion requires is a form of domestic pornography that comes directly out of our efforts as a culture to hide sex from children. That effort is nowhere more evident than in the demarcations we draw between the erotic world of adults and the antiseptic, nonsexual world of minors, demarcations so sharp that we balk at even the most elementary forms of sex ed. A culture that protects children from sex is almost by definition a kiddie-porn culture, since we are most turned on by that which is outlawed and untouchable. It is one of the odd paradoxes of this most housebroken form of lovemaking that

its buttercup and dumpling endearments are linked inextricably to some of our most illicit and unresolved obsessions with children and sex.

So much is made these days of the concept of private life and the way it has evolved historically from the largely pejorative view of it held in ancient Greece and Rome (where privacy was the domain of second-class citizens like women and slaves) to the modern celebratory view of it as the source of our deepest personal satisfactions, the place to which we withdraw for vacations, to get away from it all. Along with the diary and the billet-doux, baby talk stands as one of the most extreme developments in the history of privacy. It thrives on the rigidly exclusive distinctions we make between the public and private spheres. Our hermetic attempts to use language, allusions, and in-jokes to rope off a furtive space in which to make love reveal a number of things about our understanding of sex and intimacy. For the most part, we view love as an intensely subjective and isolating experience that requires total immersion in a clandestine world cut off from other men and women not only physically, with our bedroom doors, or emotionally, with our jealousies and obsessions, but also linguistically, with our baby talk.

And yet, in the last few decades, there has been a significant erosion of our strict separation of the public from the private—an erosion that has the potential to change the whole course of the history of private life and undermine the introversion and exclusivity on which baby talk is based. The human-potential movement, as well as the New Age and self-help industries, has encouraged a growing intolerance of private life, an impatience for those who can't "express themselves" before others, who can't relate their feelings, be honest, be real. As our culture becomes saturated with the slogans and mannerisms of psychotherapy, we are increasingly seeking new forums—the workshop, the AA meeting—for encounters we once reserved for the confessional and the bedroom. As the hard-and-fast distinction between the manner one assumes at work and at home, before one's family and one's colleagues, an acquaintance and a best friend, is weakened by the new imperative for self-expression, baby talk may lose some of its surreptitious and fetishistic appeal and be retired (an antique, like chivalry and courtly love) as a form of foreplay based on a largely archaic notion of the intense seclusion, physical and linguistic, that relationships require.

Discussions of art and the history of ideas have revolved around the rise and fall of various sensibilities—the naturalism of Zola; the romanticism of Byron; the decadence of Huysmans and Wilde; even the futuristic aesthetic of Art Deco. Little attention has been given, however, to an aesthetic as pervasive and, in the long run, as prepossessing as all of these various sensibilities taken as a whole: the aesthetic of the cute, a romantic or Victorian invention that continues to exert a profound influence on, among other things, the manner in which we make love and express this love to each other.

What are some of the things that we think of as cute? Pets, stuffed animals, children, dolls, or miniatures of things that are not in themselves necessarily cute, like the plates, tables, and chairs that we find in a doll's house. A five-year-old boy is cute when he swaggers around imitating a man, or a five-year-old girl when she rocks her doll in imitation of her mother. A dress is cute when it seems to allude to the sense of fashion of someone younger than the woman who wears it. In short, the aesthetic of the cute is an aesthetic of the small, the young, the adorable, the defenseless, the inarticulate, the mute, and, perhaps most importantly, the human*oid* as opposed to the human: the child who imitates us, the monkey that looks like us, the doll's house that resembles our own. The cute is an aesthetic that induces benevolent condescension on the part of the viewer. It presents an image of the adult world in fanciful miniature, with all of the basic ingredients of our daily lives transposed

[List]

ENDEARMENTS

From the results of a national survey on "pet names" recently conducted for Korbel Champagne Cellars, of Guerneville, California, by R. H. Bruskin Associates, a market research firm. Bruskin asked one thousand adults for their favorite "term of endearment."

1. Honey
2. His / Her name
3. Baby
4. Sweetheart
5. Dear
6. Lover
7. Darling
8. Sugar
9. Pumpkin / Angel (tied)
10. Precious / Beautiful (tied)

into another context, where we see them with new eyes, aestheticized by the aura of innocence and defenselessness that the cute is intended to radiate.

The cute is also what people turn themselves into for the purpose of seducing or charming their lovers. Baby talk is the most esoteric and artificial form of cuteness, an attempt by adults, often well past their prime, to approximate the same endearing cuddliness of a teddy bear or a kitty cat on a calendar. To any witness other than the person for whom it is intended, baby talk is not cute but grotesque, because the attempt to imitate a child can be charming only to the indulgent audience of one's lover, who is willing to overlook the obvious poetic license involved in the transformation of an emphatically large and uncute thing into a kissable and cuddlesome miniature.

What at first sight seems to be the most innocent and unpolitical of aesthetics is, in fact, not only ideological but propagandistic. This is because cuteness aestheticizes images of powerlessness, vulnerability, and innocence. Cuteness thus serves to aestheticize all emotions associated with control and parenthood, calling forth with Pavlovian infallibility our maternal and paternal instincts to take care of something, to nurture and raise it. Cuteness, as the aesthetic of the family, makes the fundamental units that structure our society not just necessary but attractive and endearing, and thus helps to perpetuate all of the institutions that are in any way associated with procreation and the strengthening of social bonds, whether that be by making our children or our lovers adorable.

[Inventory]

A BORDELLO STARTER KIT

From the list of "personal property" sold at a November auction by the IRS as part of its sale of the Mustang Ranch, a Nevada brothel that was seized in September for nonpayment of taxes. The brothel itself was sold for $1.49 million.

PARLOR

5-foot loveseats (10)
Rowe Ami jukebox, with 200 records
Deco clock (unicorn)
Red plastic sign ("Ask About Orgy Room")
Red plastic sign ("Orgy Room")
40" x 50" painting with gold-leaf frame (two women)
74" x 52" picture (masked woman)
Deco picture (small [illegible])
Framed print (Marilyn Monroe)
Oriental wall fan
Hanging lamps (2)
Purple glass table lamps (2)
Oriental ceramic table lamps (2)
Black standing ashtrays (5)

[Questionnaire]

LOVE STORIES TO ORDER

From the customer order form distributed by Swan Publishing, a Placentia, California, company that sells personalized romance novels. Evelyn Brown, the company's founder, uses a computer program to adapt one of the three romance novels she has written to reflect information the client has provided. This form is for the "P.S. Edition," which includes a "custom epilogue" and costs $200. Brown has sold more than 2,000 customized versions of her novels.

Check one of the following.

☐ *Lotto Love* (Find Riches and Romance . . . All in the Same Night!)
[ ] *Paradise Dream* (The Hawaiian Adventure Romance)
☐ *Our Love* (The California Romance)

HERO	HEROINE
Hair Color:	Hair Color:
Nickname:	Nickname:
Special Song:	Favorite Flowers:

How long has the couple known each other?
How did they first meet?
What first attracted our Hero to the Heroine?
Our Heroine to the Hero?
Describe the couple's first kiss:
When did they first know it was LOVE?
What special joke or secret "sign" do they share?
What was the couple's most romantic adventure (vacation, etc.)?
Describe their courtship (Whirlwind? Passionate? Long?):
What is their fondest hope for the future?
Other memories?

Fire extinguishers (21)
6-foot artificial potted ficus tree
Hanging potted silk vines (3)
Pink silk flower arrangement
Unused pillows (19)
Used pillows (20)
Bag of stuffed animals
Bag of hats
Box of 8-track tapes
Box of assorted games
Assorted towels (66)
Assorted sheets (98)
Oxygen canisters (9)
Framed "pleasure points" poster

[Tips]

AND BE SURE TO BUTTER HIS ROLL

From "How to Be a Great Date," in the December 1990 issue of Cosmopolitan.

☐ Pretend he's Henry Kissinger and you're Barbara Walters—then interview him.
☐ Don't be afraid to show a little leg or cleavage. He won't think you're a bimbo—just very sexy.
☐ Never complain (the chops are overcooked, the movie was awful).
☐ Order dessert—a lusty appetite is sexy.
☐ No personal problems—the fact that your cat is sick and you don't have enough money to pay the rent can wait.
☐ Encourage him to talk about his work. (So what if you don't know stocks from bonds—could a little high-finance input hurt?)
☐ Be touchy-feely—that is, touch his hand lightly after he says something particularly funny, brush up against him when entering a restaurant, let your knee lightly touch his in the cab.
☐ Don't brag about your ancestors.
☐ Don't stop him if he's telling a joke you've already heard—laugh anyway.
☐ If he wants to talk about his shrink, let him (yours, of course, is strictly off-limits).
☐ Keep ladies' room visits to *under* five minutes.
☐ At the table, be a little geishalike—butter his roll, put the sugar alongside his coffee.
☐ Say "That's absolutely fascinating!" at least once before the evening's over.

Small purple Mustang Ranch decanter pouches (29)
Plastic box of hand tools and padlocks
Intimus Simplex portable shredder

BAR/LIQUOR ROOM

NCR cash register
Red vinyl barstools (13)
Ice buckets and accessories
Coke and collins syrup (27 gallons)
Mineral water (73 bottles)
Assorted wines (151 bottles)
Assorted champagnes (43 bottles)

OFFICE

Metal cashbox
Credit-card imprinters (2)
Time-card machine, ledger, and time cards
Electric pencil sharpeners (3)
Assorted legal pads

KITCHEN

Condiment dispensers
Assorted cooking utensils
Proctor-Silex four-slice toaster
Jell-O molds (12)
Large green olives (6 cases)
Box of plastic champagne glasses
Box of unopened cleaning supplies
Box of assorted nonprescription medicines
Foreplay sensual lubricants (25 boxes)
Trojan prophylactics, plain (7 boxes)
Trojan prophylactics, ribbed (7 boxes)
Flancy 3000 prophylactics (28 boxes)
Contempo prophylactics (8 boxes)
Prime prophylactics (4 boxes)
Prime prophylactics, snugger fit (7 boxes)
Brass unicorn with marble base
Large brass elk

GUEST SUITE

Heart-shaped music box
Ceramic music box (lady)
Music box (X-rated Santa)
Green music box (Our Lady of Fatima)
Green glass prisms (2)
Ceramic candleholders (white ram) (2)
Ceramic dish (violin)
Ceramic lamp (clown)
Ceramic bunnies
Knickknacks (onyx egg, elephant, Mexican ashtray)
Crystal ashtray
Christmas beer mug (Clydesdales)
Telephone (woman)
Bead and rhinestone handbag (silver)
Assorted velour pants outfits
Long bathrobes and nightgowns
Assorted lingerie
Women's loungers with feathers
Religious figurines (3)
Wind chimes

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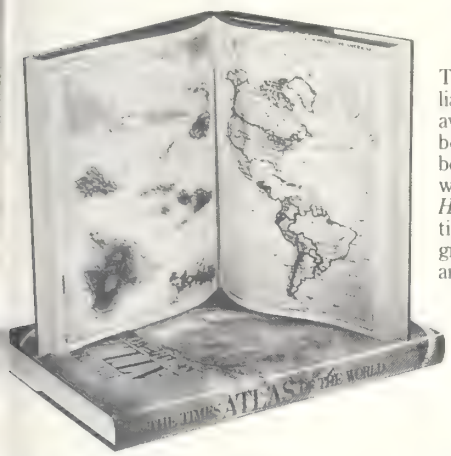
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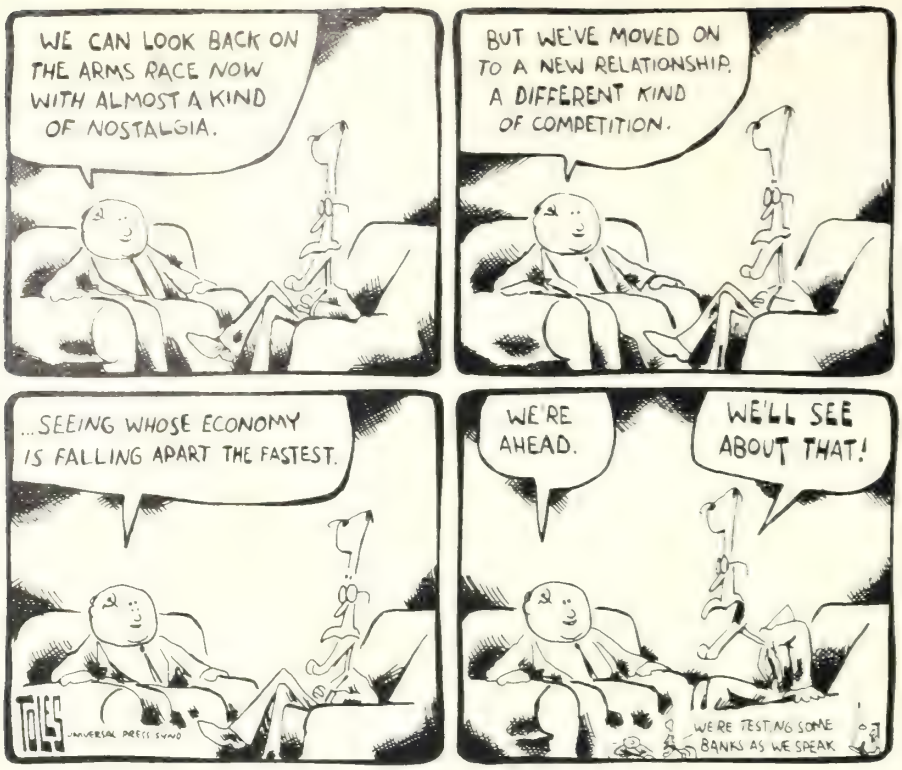
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From the Buffalo News.

[Letters]

DESERT SHIELD: A RESERVIST'S CHRONICLE

From a series of letters sent by Dick Runels, a member of the Air Force Reserves who is currently serving as an aircraft-maintenance crew chief in Saudi Arabia, to Tom Stanton, the editor of The Voice, *a weekly newspaper based in New Baltimore, Michigan. Runels, a Vietnam veteran, works as a mechanic at Selfridge Air National Guard Base near New Baltimore; membership in the reserves is a precondition for Runels's civilian job at the base. In October, Stanton began publishing Runels's letters as a regular feature in* The Voice. *After his second letter was published, Runels was ordered to submit all future letters to his base commander in Saudi Arabia for approval. The fourth letter below, dated November 22, 1990, is the first Runels wrote after his reprimand; he did not submit it to the base commander.*

October 11

Dear Tom,

In case you haven't heard, my reserve unit, the 927th Tactical Group, has been activated and is spending the fall (and maybe longer) on the Saudi Arabian peninsula. The best guess is that we'll be here for ninety days.

After twenty-two hours of flying, we landed at our positions. I can't tell you where we are: That's classified, for obvious reasons. But we call our little piece of "heaven" Mirage Air Base.

We at Mirage do have it better than probably 90 percent of the troops on the peninsula, but that's only because our airplanes require a lot of space and facilities to fly support twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

That being said, this is a sand-covered, flea-infested, hot, smelly, congested—did I mention hot?—very basic tent/hooch city that has been force-grown in a hurry to deal with a situation nobody really knows about or knows how it will turn out.

Regardless of the interviews given, we are not all happy to be here, nor did we expect to be here. And we can't wait to get home.

So let everyone at home know that we of the 927th are here, but we can't tell you where; will be coming home, but can't tell you when; are doing our jobs well, but can't tell you why.

We're surviving, trying to cope with a difficult situation. We'll probably look back in amazement at how quickly it all passed. In about thirty years.

Dick Runels

October 27

Hi Tom,

It's finally set in—reality, that is. Now almost everyone realizes that, yes, we are going to be here ninety days or more. For some it is a hard fact to face that Thanksgiving, probably Christmas, maybe even New Year's will be spent right here, in the sand, at Mirage. For those of us who are counting, it's sixty six days and a wake-up.

The rumor mill works overtime. We're rotating on schedule; we're rotating before Thanksgiving; war will begin October 15, October 17, November 10, December 24 (pick a date); Milwaukee, Chicago, Minneapolis (pick one) has been alerted to relieve us; nobody has been alerted to relieve us. The basic truth is that nobody knows what is going on. When we get home, we get home. We are at the mercy of the green machine, and it can do whatever it wants with us.

As far as being at Mirage: There are *many* worse places to be over here. Small consolation but true. Flying as a crew chief, I've had a chance to see how other units live. We are lucky: We have showers and three hot meals a day, air-conditioned quarters and offices, and quite a lot of things to do, considering. What you read about bases closer to the front, mostly army and marine units, is true—they do live in the sand, on the sand, with the sand, in spite of the sand.

But like the GIs at the front, boredom and uncertainty are the leading feelings here. When is something going to happen? *Is* something going to happen? What will happen to me if something *does* happen? If we knew, it would be much easier.

As the weeks pass, I'm sure tempers will flare and depression will set in as it gets closer to the holidays. Not even Bob Hope can get rid of these feelings. Tell your readers that the letters they get, filled with despair and crying, are our way of venting frustration at a system that has us *completely* under its control. We need them to handle those complaints and cries with compassion. We're not being tortured, starved, beaten, or abused; we're just part of a machine that is grinding on toward some vague goal. If it was clearer why we're here, it would be easier to take what is given.

Take care,
Dick Runels

November 4

Dear Tom,

One of our maintenance crew chiefs had to go back to the States on emergency leave. He just returned with some very depressing news about how our dependents back home are being treated and what they are being told about us in country.

Wives are being called with "important information about your husband," an alarming, fear-producing phrase in itself, only to be told, "He's doing okay." *Why* is this being done by our own

[Briefing Transcript]

NAME THAT MANEUVER

From the transcript of a Department of Defense press briefing given on November 15, 1990, by Pete Williams, a Pentagon press officer. Earlier that day, U.S. troops had begun a training exercise in Saudi Arabia called Imminent Thunder.

Q: How do you come up with the name Imminent Thunder?

A: First of all, I don't come up with it.

Q: Who does come up with it?

A: The way it was explained to me is that it is not random, computer-generated, press-a-button-and-it-comes-out, as many of you might have suspected. The way it's explained to me is that each command, in addition to being given a part of the world to command, is given a part of the alphabet to command. If you're the Central Command, the first word can begin with the letter *I* through something, and the second with—you have to choose your words from a list derived from those letters of the alphabet. So obviously, Central Command has both *I* and *T* in its area of responsibility. Beyond that, in terms of exactly how it works—

Q: Did the same people who thought of Desert Shield think of Imminent Thunder?

A: I don't know.

Q: Because Desert Shield has a defensive implication, whereas Imminent Thunder has an offensive—

A: That's a good question.

Q: Why "imminent"?

A: I don't know how the words—my sense of it is, I don't mean to make light of this, although I understand the point that you're making. Nonetheless, having been given those letters of the alphabet, some words are generated and then someone sits down and says, "I take that word out of column A and that word out of column B and they sort of fit together."

Q: Can we find out who that "someone" is?

A: I doubt it.

people? Apparently, at briefings for dependents they're being told we're having a holiday campout, or field day, or some other neato adventure. That is pure baloney.

The rumors that come from the States—we'll be here for 180 days; our relief unit has had all its pilots quit; and don't come, we'll go home, then they'll be called back—all lead to a certain amount of depression in the men and women here. The primary reason is that we know what's going on here; no one else does. And *all* the rumors are false. But we don't know who is spreading them to our wives and lovers or why. Every night someone calls home and finds his wife in tears because of some rumor that she's heard. It would be much better if our command just said *nothing*.

This is not, I repeat not, a picnic. I don't know of anyone at Mirage who would stay an extra day. Nobody hopes war breaks out or that we get extended. If this is such a great place, why is *everyone* counting the days until our "projected" departure date?

Dick

November 22

Hi Tom,

Well, at this point I don't know exactly what to say. This may be read by anybody (Hi CIA, OSI, CentCom, whoever) or nobody. It's not intended to be an article, just a note to you about this place.

Morale at Mirage is practically nonexistent. Having been extended ninety days more has *everyone* terminally bummed. It was just getting easy to accept the ninety days, then on "hump day," the halfway point, zowie! We get it right between the eyes. Ninety more with the possibility of 180 more on top of that!

This base is a caldron of unrest. The fact that I was censored has many people upset; the extension has everyone upset; there is a small rebellion by the mechanics because we are being *ordered* to fly without compensation or adequate survival equipment even when it says right on our orders that flying activities are *not* included in our jobs.

I am terribly frustrated because I don't know exactly what to write. The unrest, unhappiness, misery, and military BS here *is* the story. The mission is secondary to what is going on.

My censoring is a tempest in a teapot. All I did was write about our people, what they've experienced here and how they are dealing with being treated like children and betrayed by their own government, while at the same time being told they are here to "protect democracy"—protect democracy in countries that have sheikhdoms and absolute despots ruling them. These are countries where women are being condemned because they are protesting for the right to *drive*! I could go on, but I've only got so much paper.

Tom, tell me what to do. With all the crap we put up with they want stories about our Thanksgiving dinner (which *was* nice) and planting flowers. I can't do that.

Your friend,
Dick

[Solicitation]

HOW TO HIT THE REVOLVING DOOR RUNNING

From a letter sent on November 14, 1990, by Congressman Chuck Douglas to seventeen law firms in Washington and Boston. Douglas, a New Hampshire Republican, was defeated in the November election. In 1989, Congress passed a law prohibiting defeated or retired members from lobbying their ex-colleagues in Congress for one year. Because the law went into effect with the convening of the new Congress last month, Douglas is not bound by the prohibition.

Dear Managing Partner:

Having just been defeated in an upset race for reelection to Congress, I am now looking to renew my life in the law. As a member of Congress grandfathered under the *existing* rules of ethics, I may begin any representational activities without delay or denial of access to the floor or committee staff.

From 1970 to 1974 I served as a lobbyist for private clients and the governor of New Hampshire. From 1985 to 1989 I represented the New Hampshire Mortgage Bankers Association and the New Hampshire Homebuilders Association in our legislature.

My governmental experience also includes two years as legal and legislative counsel to the governor. Currently I am completing a term in Congress, to which I was elected in 1988.

I have authored about 500 appellate court opinions and have more than forty published articles in various legal journals and law reviews. I enjoy the practice of law and wanted to contact you to open up this new and exciting possibility for both of us.

Sincerely,
Chuck Douglas

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Highway Range (miles)	486	[illegible]	[illegible]

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[Apology]

MIKE DUKAKIS, WATCH YOUR MAIL

From a letter sent last June by Lee Atwater, then chairman of the Republican National Committee, to Tom Turnipseed, a Columbia, South Carolina, attorney. In 1980 Atwater organized polling for the campaign to reelect Floyd Spence, a Republican running against Turnipseed for Congress. When Turnipseed, who had undergone electroshock therapy in his youth, accused Atwater of using telephone pollsters to falsely inform voters that Turnipseed belonged to the NAACP, Atwater replied, "I'm not going to respond to that guy. In college, I understand they hooked him up to jumper cables." Spence won the election. Atwater, who is currently being treated for a brain tumor, resigned as chairman recently. Turnipseed accepted Atwater's apology.

Dear Tom,

Nothing is confidential in politics, but as I lie here and write this letter, I want you to know that that is my intention. As far as I'm concerned, you may do as you please with the letter, but it is very important to me that I let you know that, of everything that has happened in my career, one of the low points remains the so-called jumper cables episode.

As both of us know, it has never been fully or truthfully explained, and it has been rehashed so many times that we have both been hurt by it. I've been under the weather lately, and it's my hope that you'll grant a sick man a favor and try to forget it. Please understand that for the last few years I have tried not to talk about it and I've tried to rectify it, but it goes on and on due to the Fourth Estate.

Tom, I want you to know that I clearly understand that you are a special person. Your talent and your uniqueness and your specialness never escaped me for a minute.

As I reflect (which I'm doing a great deal these days), there are very few people that I feel a need to get square with, and you are one of them. While I don't anticipate that we will become political allies or that either of us will change our philosophy or our outlook, I do want you to know that I would be one happy guy if we could put some of this bullshit behind us. I'd like to think that if I ran into you at the YMCA in Columbia that I could get some of that Turnipseed humor and philosophy.

Tom, I ask that you think about one thing when you analyze this letter, and that's that I'm not writing this because of politics or anything of that nature. I made a mistake. I don't want to sit down and rehash it, but part of the mistake was being twenty-five years old, acting cute, and bragging about it in a way that distorted the whole story.

Let's forget this one matter. I know it would do my heart and soul a lot of good. I [illegible] that I have no ax to grind with you or, frankly, with anyone else. My illness has taught me something about the nature of humanity, love, brotherhood, and relationships that I never understood and probably never would have. So from that standpoint, there is some truth and good in everything. Aside from that, I feel like the little boy in the manure pile that Ronald Reagan talked about. He was shoveling away and looked up and smiled and said, "There's got to be a pony in there somewhere." The closest thing to a pony that I can think of would be for you to help put this thing behind us.

Sincerely,
Lee

P.S. Tom, *this is very sincere!*

[Essay]

WHOSE REVOLUTION IN CENTRAL EUROPE?

From "Impressions from a Journey in Central Europe," by Michael Howard, in the October 25, 1990, issue of the London Review of Books. *Howard, who for many years was professor of modern history at Oxford in England, now teaches history at Yale University.*

Casual tourists from the West, traveling in air-conditioned buses and staying in modern government-sponsored hotels, may be pleasantly surprised by their first sight of Central Europe. In what used to be East Germany the countryside looks as prosperous and cultivated as anywhere in the West. City centers have been tidied up and carefully rebuilt, while the apartment blocks on the outskirts are no worse than one would find in the United Kingdom—in some places rather better. In Poland agriculture is picturesquely archaic, and in the bustling small towns the people look as well clothed and fed as they would at home. In Czechoslovakia Prague sparkles like a jewel, its streets thronged with happy holidaymakers. As for Hungary, it is hard to realize one is no longer in the West: the huge plains being efficiently (to all appearances) harvested by echelons of combines; the signs of prosperous well-being in industrial centers like Miskolc; the weekenders crowding the shores of Lake Balaton; above all, Budapest, a city in its elegance still more cosmopolitan than Paris than Vienna—is there anything [illegible]

wrong here? The region is certainly "backward" compared with Western Europe and the United States, but it always was. The cars and roads are smaller, the trains shabbier, the shops fewer and selling a more limited range of goods. But so it was with Spain or southern Italy a few decades ago, a "backwardness" almost attractive to the overfed, overurbanized Westerner and, anyhow, surely remediable by a judicious infusion of capital, technology, and expertise.

Appearances are not totally deceptive. The image of Eastern Europe as a miserable gulag oppressed by Soviet power was always overdrawn. Even in gulags prisoners find ways to get by. The system worked, up to a point. The hard work of the Germans, the vitality of the Poles, the ingenuity of the Hungarians, the canniness of the Czechs, all made it work or found ways round it if it did not. Life was admittedly hell for the intellectuals and the entrepreneurial classes, all the people that we in the West knew and liked; all the people on whom the ultimate progress and prosperity of their country depended. But the industrial workers in the cities and the poorer workers on the land enjoyed a degree of security, if not indeed prosperity, undreamed of by their parents. No one was *very* badly off. Things were very slowly beginning to get better, much as they had been getting better in France in the last years of the *ancien régime*. With continued suppression of the malcontents, continued isolation from the West, so reasoned the apparatchiks, they might go on getting better—if they were not already as good as anyone could reasonably expect.

It is important to bear this in mind, for once the present excitement is over, and unless the new rulers manage the transition to a market economy with unusual skill, nostalgia for the good old days when the currency was stable and jobs were secure may become a serious problem. There is something a little disquieting about the way in which the new political elites blame their difficulties on the people they have to govern: on the sluggish reluctance of bureaucrats to take responsibility, on the unwillingness of peasants to take back the land so freely offered to them, on the reluctance to participate in elections, on the habits of black-market dealing and petty corruption that grew up under a command economy. The cynic may well recall Bertolt Brecht's advice to the East German regime after the Berlin uprising of 1953: Rather than elect a new government, they had better elect a new people. For "the masses," to use that inadequate term, had as little to do with the revolutions of 1989 as they had with those of 1848. The old order fell not as the result of a great popular upheaval but because it had lost self-confidence, was not prepared to defend itself, and crumbled at the first sign of urban insurrection. The exceptions, of course, were the Poles. There the Catholic Church had preserved across class barriers a stubborn and universal sense of national resistance that had gradually and peacefully found political expression in Solidarity: a body so clearly expressive of the national will that the regime prudently decided to admit it to a share of power. But the Czechs had been too effectively cowed, and the Hungarians were too well fed, to make trouble on a major scale. The Jakes and Kadar regimes enjoyed the legitimacy of inertia, and that is not a force to be underrated. The passivity with which they allowed themselves to be swept away once it was clear that the Russians would not help them showed how little confidence they had in their own achievements. They did not even try, as Iliescu did in Romania, to recruit strong-arm squads from the factories or the collective farms to deal with the urban, largely bourgeois insurgents who overthrew them. "The masses" stood by and watched that overthrow with indifference, if not contempt.

Their successors in government are very conscious that they do not yet enjoy the support of those masses. They have been at pains to establish their democratic credentials by instituting pluralistic politics, free elections, and elaborate provision for "human rights," but they are deeply worried, as we have seen, by the apparent indifference of "the people" in whose name they have taken power. To blame this indifference on bad habits produced by forty years of communist rule is, however, wishful thinking. More likely it results from the caution of the good soldier Schweik, who has seen governments come and seen them go and will judge the new leaders



From The Spectator, the London weekly

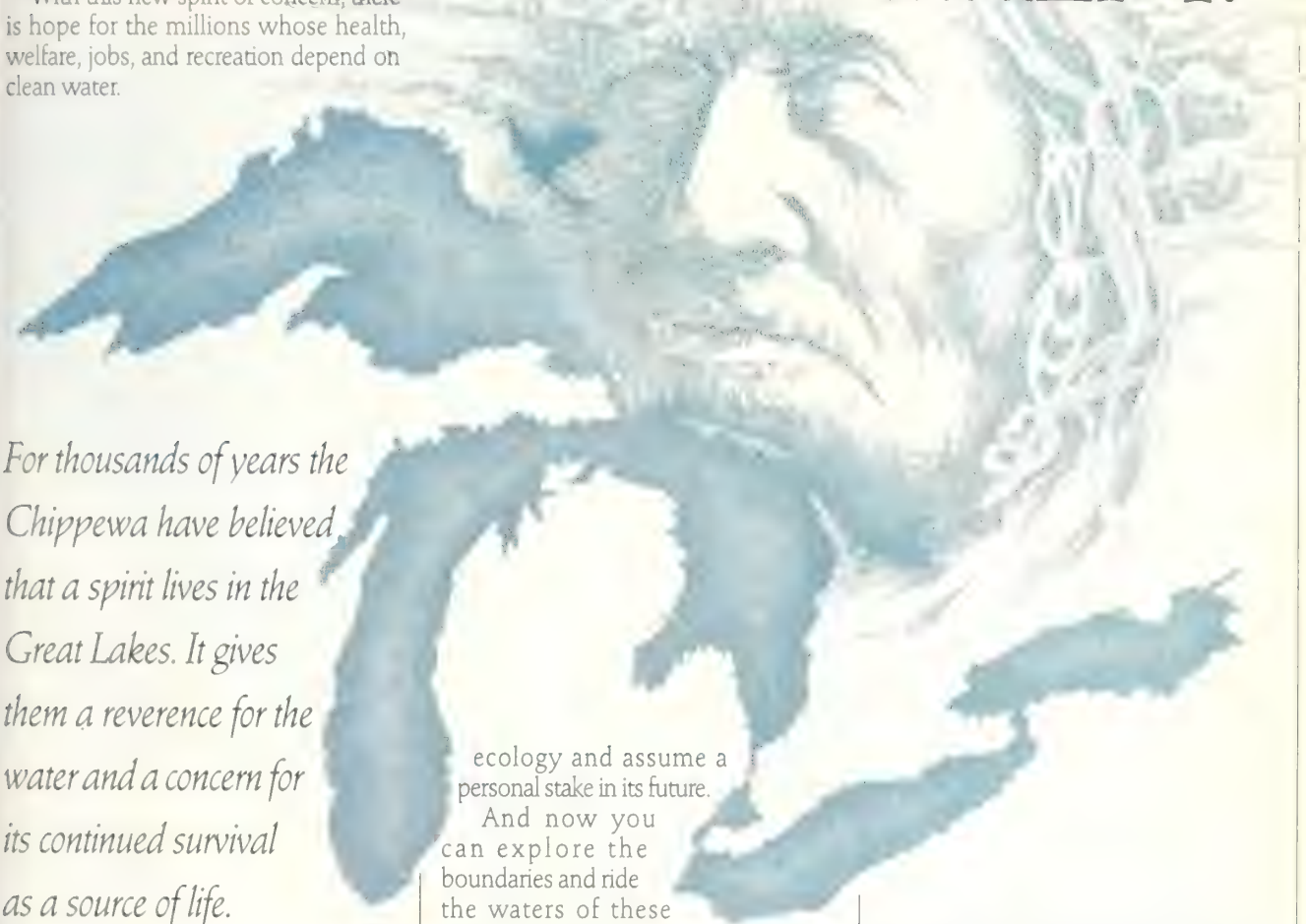
RESTORING AMERICA'S INLAND SEAS

HAS THE SPIRIT OF THE LAKES COME BACK TO SAVE THEM?

HUMAN ABUSE for 300 years has gravely injured the Great Lakes. Soil erosion from deforestation, pollution from industrial waste, urban sewage, and invader species have all played havoc with the ecosystem of the once "sweet seas."

To save the lakes, the United States and Canadian governments, as well as research institutes, businesses, citizens' groups, and private individuals banded together in a spirit of restoring the waters to their former glory.

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For thousands of years the Chippewa have believed that a spirit lives in the Great Lakes. It gives them a reverence for the water and a concern for its continued survival as a source of life. Perhaps this spirit now guides all those who are working in the Great Lakes basin to keep the lakes alive.

Today, there are fishing tournaments on the lakes. Aboard a large Great Lakes schooner, school children study the lake ecology and assume a personal stake in its future.

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not by their stated intentions but by their results. Democracy has always been a fragile plant in Central Europe, let alone farther east. The survival of the new regimes, and perhaps of the ideals they incarnate, depends less on the democratic title deeds that appear so impressive in the West than on their capacity to make the economic system work more effectively than their predecessors did. The bottom line is not the ballot box but *la poule au pot*.

To survive, the new regimes have to solve two gigantic problems. The first is to modernize their economic infrastructure after forty years of stagnation and neglect. The second is to move from a command to a market economy—a task universally recognized to be urgent and necessary but that is bound to be, both politically and socially, deeply traumatic. The establishment of formal democratic structures will be relevant only insofar as it enables them to do so, whether through mobilizing public opinion or by attracting essential support from the West.

Those likely to do well in the new market economies of Central Europe are not the civilized, Western-oriented intellectuals who come to conferences and seminars and spend a term in American universities, but other elements not nearly so nice. They will be the former black-market operators and the former apparatchiks—insofar as the two categories are distinct. These are the people who have the contacts, the local influence, who know how to run things. These are, unfortunately, the kind of people without whom capitalism cannot get going in the first place or continue to function for very long—Balzacian creatures, such as those who laid the foundations for the prosperity of Western Europe and the United States. They will be distinctly unpopular with those who lack their dubious talents, and their activities may lead people to wonder whether there was not something to be said for socialism after all.

It would, therefore, not be surprising if quite bitter social conflict were to develop in Central Europe. In fact, the fundamental problems of the region are not political or economic. They are social. They have less to do with the mechanism of the state than with the habits of the community—with the nature, or the absence, of what Ralf Dahrendorf and others have called "civil society." There is nothing necessarily wrong with social conflict. The problem is how to create political systems that can contain that conflict and make it fruitful. Some Western models may be helpful and some techniques may be transferable, but only at a very superficial level. Fundamentally, what Central Europe needs today is not so much formal democracy on the Western model as strong governments commanding broad consensus, responsive to popular needs, and operating within the rule of law.

If multiparty democracy can produce such governments, well and good, but the going will be very tough. Even with Western support on an unimaginably lavish scale, the economic situation is likely to get worse before it can get better. And here the analogy with 1848—1848 in France, that is—does seem depressingly relevant. If the new political parties cannot produce political stability and economic prosperity, they will inherit the popular contempt that attached to the old order, and their destruction will be greeted with the same indifference.

There has been an unspoken assumption in the West that the only obstacle to the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe adopting Western

[Paper Dolls]

THE PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY SUIT



From Ronald Reagan Paper Dolls in Full Color, *by Tom Tierney, one of a series of boxes of presidential paper dolls published by Dover Publications of Mineola, New York. The boxes, in New York City stores, accompanied the clothing worn by Ronald Reagan at various stages of his life. The figure at right, "The Reagans on the campaign trail, 1980," is wearing many costumes that can be attached to the basic Reagan doll at left.*

values and structures has been the imposition by the Soviet Union of foreign ideology and foreign domination. It was assumed that once these political shackles were removed, the peoples could, like released prisoners, resume a "normal" political life.

However, the history of Central Europe has produced a political culture distinct from that of the West. There has not been the growth of self-governing institutions from the bottom, such as occurred in Anglo-Saxon societies, or the drastic destruction of the feudal order and the institution of a legal, administrative, and political framework based on a concept of the Rights of Man, which took place in Western Europe after 1789. In Central and Eastern Europe centuries of agrarian feudalism and authoritarian rule were bound to produce a political culture of acquiescence if not submission, tempered by skepticism and evasion. Vigorous individual enterprise was unlikely to flourish, and those most likely to promote it emigrated in large numbers to the United States. In particular, intellectuals unwilling to be assimilated into the mechanism of the state were forced into interior or actual emigration—a situation that won them sympathy from their colleagues abroad but tended to alienate them from their own peoples, of whom they too easily conceived an ideal image very different from the mundane reality. How can we, from such roots, expect model liberal democracies to emerge overnight?

It is important, therefore, not to expect too much too soon. Dramatic appeals have been made to the effect that "democracy" is under threat in Central Europe and that it is the duty of the West to pour in money in order to shore it up. There are certainly good reasons why we should provide the new regimes with all the help we can in order to modernize their economies—good, practical economic and ecological reasons—but such contributions will not necessarily safeguard "democracy." A "democratic" regime that depends on foreign support for its credibility is something of a contradiction in terms. Democracy is a matter of political habits, not of formal institutions, and the development of these habits takes time.

Above all, we must beware the Manichaean tendency, so prevalent in the United States, to divide the regimes into totalitarian or democratic, slave or free, and ignore the gradations that lie between. In Central Europe Marxism-Leninism, with all its cumbrous apparatuses of political and intellectual oppression, has been effectively and permanently destroyed. It did not work. But pluralistic democracy may not work either, at least not yet. If it does, it is likely to be along lines rather different from our own.

[List]

ASSASSINATION PLOTS

From a list, distributed to visitors to the Congressional Cemetery, of people buried there who were "involved in the events surrounding the life, assassination, funeral or burial of Abraham Lincoln. The cemetery, which contains more than 75,000 corpses, was originally created in 1807 so that members of Congress could be buried in Washington, D.C. Though members were buried there in the nineteenth century, most sites have been purchased by private citizens.

☐ James W. Pumphrey (1833–1906)—John Wilkes Booth rented horse from him.
☐ Seaton Munroe (?–1896)—Lawyer, attended Booth inquest.
☐ Charles Henry Nichols (1820–1889)—Testified in defense of Lewis Payne [one of four people hanged for their involvement in Lincoln's assassination].
☐ James Crowhill Hall (1805–1889)—Physician at Lincoln's deathbed.
☐ John Edward Buckingham (1828–1909)—Night doorkeeper at Ford's Theatre.
☐ Charles Allen (1835–1908)—Washington physician, testified in defense of Dr. Mudd [the physician who was imprisoned for life for setting Booth's broken leg after Booth shot the president].
☐ Peter Taltavul (1835–1881)—Operated tavern next to Ford's Theatre.
☐ Henry Pratt Cattell (1838–1915)—Embalmed Lincoln's body.
☐ Francis Maria Scala (1819–1903)—U.S. Marine Band member, played often for Lincoln.
☐ John Alexander W. Clarvoe (1831–1879)—Metro Police detective.
☐ Frank T. Sands (1833–1868)—Undertaker, provided coffin and accompanied Lincoln's funeral train.
☐ David E. Herold (1842–1865)—Convicted conspirator [hanged for his involvement in Lincoln's assassination].
☐ Charles W. David (?–1870)—Defense witness for David Herold.
☐ James Henry St. Clair (?–1883)—Usher at Ford's Theatre.
☐ Joseph G. Shelton (1829–1907)—Lincoln's guard at White House.
☐ Charles Forbes (?–1895)—Lincoln's personal valet and friend, secured box at Ford's Theatre.

My guess is except that in the new "European house" envisioned by Mikhail Gorbachev there are likely to be many apartments, and that in some of them we may find ourselves not entirely comfortable.

[Etymology]

BY A LOGIC THAT ELUDES US

From the postscript to Billy Watson's Croker Sack, *a collection of essays by Franklin Burroughs Jr., to be published this month by W. W. Norton. After completing the first essay in this collection, Burroughs sent it to his agent, Deanne Urmy, for comment. In her response she asked, "What was a croker sack?" The following letter was his reply. Burroughs teaches English at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine.*

Dear Deanne,

I was surprised that you didn't know what a croker sack was and further surprised to find that *Webster's New World Dictionary*, *Webster's Third International Dictionary*, and the *Oxford American Dictionary* didn't know either. I had to go to several dictionaries of Americanisms to find it, and even then the results weren't profoundly satisfactory.

In South Carolina the word referred to any biggish cloth sack—for example, the hundred-pound sacks that livestock feed came in. It was a word like any other; I'm certain that nobody thought of it as quaint or archaic. If there was anything notable about it, it was that country people were likely to mispronounce it—*croakus sack*—and we town folk found this an amusing rustic illiteracy. I didn't know where the word originated, but then we seldom know the origins of the words we so blithely bandy about. There was one plausible etymology right at hand, no farther away than Mishoe's Fish Market: A *croaker* is a small, abundant fish of the drum family, which can be caught in any tidal inlet. For all I know, they might have been caught by the sackful, and, from what I know of their taste, it is easy to imagine two men dividing up the day's catch and one saying to the other: "Look, you take the croakers and I'll take the *croaker sack*." Folk etymology is a minor form of mythmaking; it gives plausible explanations about how things came to be as they are.

Real etymology, however, is a minor form of science, and, like science, it requires much more credulity than the myths it supplants. We have to abandon the evidence of our senses and the logic of our experience, and trust entirely to methods that maintain their authority by reducing everything else to absurdity. No myths about the origins of life or the nativity of the stars are as staggeringly implausible as the accounts of these events we receive from biologists and astrophysicists. *Credo quia absurdum est* is a first principle of science as well as of theology. And, I might add, with much recent evidence to support me, of literary exegesis as well.

To return to *croker sack*. It has nothing to do with croakers. There is absolutely no historical evidence to support it. *To croak*, of course, is also *to die*, and this inelegant colloquialism has been around for a surprisingly long time. So maybe a croker sack was a body bag? This conjecture (like the one about the fish) has in fact been conjectured; it, too, has no historical evidence.

In the fourteenth century, Englishmen, on crusade in the Holy Land, discovered saffron. They thought enough of it to smuggle some bulbs back to England on the unlikely chance that a spiky, bright-blossomed little plant that thrived in the arid heat of the eastern Mediterranean would flourish in the damp and chill of their native land. Implausibility being what it is, the plant in fact flourished, and soon vast fields of it were established in the dampest and chilliest of all the English shires, Essex and Cambridge.

Saffron is collected from the pistils of the autumnal crocus. It was sometimes called *crocus*, and a saffron dealer was called a croker.

Aha. One pounces. The dealer had a sack, and that was called a croker's sack until the second *s* swallowed the first and it became a croker sack. Nope. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, all twelve volumes of it, plus supplements, records nothing for *croker* (or *croccer* or *croaker* or *crocus*) sack, bag, etc. Croker sacks are purely American. And highly regional. They are most likely to be encountered in coastal Georgia, coastal South Carolina, piedmont Virginia, and Martha's Vineyard. There are people who study these things as meticulously as ornithologists study, let us say, the migration route and breeding grounds of the Kirtland's warbler, of which more later. These highly specialized folk have also determined that the illiterate rustic form—*croakus sack*—was in fact the "correct," or at least the original, one. *Croker* came into being when the *s* of *sack* swallowed the *s* of *crocus*, leaving *crok-uh*, which then succumbed to what is known as the retroflexive final *r* (I think this is the same thing you hear in the way that many people, including the entire population of Massachusetts, pronounce *parka*: *parker*). Both the evidence of research and the laws of linguistic



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mutation leave no doubt about this: *Crocus* readily degenerates into *croker; croker* does not degenerate into *crocus*. We town folk had it wrong.

Well then: Saffron must have been a big item of the transatlantic trade. Maybe they ate tons of it on their rice in Georgia and South Carolina; it was no doubt shipped in sacks on vessels captained and crewed by old salts from Martha's Vineyard. Nothing could be simpler. Some saffron, or at least some of the sacks it came in, found its way to piedmont Virginia. Or maybe it went the other way. Maybe after the great crocus blight hit England in the eighteenth century, they grew crocuses in the Southeast and exported saffron, via ships out of Martha's Vineyard, to England, or India, or the Canary Islands, or Davy Jones's locker.

But of course we know the fatuity of that speculation, because we know what saffron is. It is the most expensive spice in the world. A pound of it requires that 75,000 crocus blossoms be painstakingly plucked, dried, and scraped. One croker sack full would suffice to feed an entire county all the saffron it could stand for approximately 350 years, assuming that the cost of it had left the people in the county money enough to buy any food to sprinkle it on. And there is no history of commercial saffron production in the South Atlantic states.

That is about where the story ends. Conjecture's last gasp is this: Saffron, being so hideously expensive, might have been packed in little sacks of special weave, so that not one precious grain of it could leak out. Cloth so woven might have become known as crocus cloth. There is early evidence to support this notion that *crocus* at one time referred to a material and not a sack. In 1696 we find a book with the arresting title of *God's Protecting Providence . . . evidenced in the Remarkable Deliverance of Divers Persons from the Devouring Waves of the Sea, amongs which they Suffered Shipwrack, and also from the more cruelly Devouring Jaws of the Cannibals of Florida,* by a Quaker named Jonathan Dickinson, who had undertaken to ship himself and his family from Jamaica to Philadelphia. As the title implies, the trip was not uneventful. Shipwrecked, washed ashore, captured by Indians, stripped naked, and subjected to many indignities, Dickinson and other members of his party suddenly found themselves being treated with inexplicable kindness. A chief brought them water, bathed them, and "got some canvas and crocus ginger bags. . . . My wife had two pieces of sail canvas given her, and I with the others had each a crocus ginger bag."

There is still a problem. Dickinson's sack was big enough for him to make a garment out of and had been used for carrying gingerroots. This suggests that it was coarse stuff, not the tightly woven sort of thing you'd expect saffron to be packed in. All citations of the material, including my own, indicate that it was something like burlap. Maybe it was used to carry crocus bulbs in, although it seems unlikely that a special cloth would have evolved for so elementary a function.

Kirtland's warbler nests in a very small territory—roughly sixty by one hundred miles—in north central Michigan, close along the banks of the celebrated (by trout fishermen) Ausable River. And it nests there only in groves of

[Poem]

PEDESTRIAN PASTORAL

By Michael Ryan. From God Hunger, *a collection of his poems published by Viking Penguin that received the 1990 Lenore Marshall/Nation Poetry Prize for the most outstanding book of poems by an American. It appeared in the October 22, 1990, issue of* The Nation.

It's nothing to a squirrel
to vault ten times its pulsing length
and come down running on a branch
thin as a popsicle,

and much less to a groundhog
flattened by a tire
to hold one perfect paw in air
as if summoning a partner,

and this unexpectedly gorgeous
shaggy white cow, inexplicably
alone in a pasture—
what is it to her this December

if at her black nose breath-puffs
vanish and appear like a Don't Walk
warning blinker? But I do walk
happily in this mild Virginia winter

unable to feel absolutely sure
I won't be here forever
almost like this, a pure observer,
for once oblivious

to the spurs of ego and desire
that—whatever death is
or is not—could be paradise
to finally do without.



The Superchief, *by Frank Holmes. This oil painting will be exhibited in a show of Holmes's work at the Galerie Tamenaga in New York City next month. Holmes lives in Nanoushaug, New York.*

young jack pines. If the trees are taller than eighteen feet, the warbler shuns them. Jack pines themselves are a curiosity. Throughout their range, they are pyrophiles, fire-lovers, germinating in the aftermath of a forest fire, establishing themselves in thick groves, growing, producing their seeds, and dying. The seeds patiently wait until God's Protecting Providence sends the fire next time. So the Kirtland's warbler is a sort of delayed phoenix; it rises out of the ashes, or at least out of the trees that rise out of the ashes. It is only slightly less rare than the phoenix; there are about 1,000 or 1,500 of them, nesting in the pine groves around Mio, Michigan (where the jack pines are now artificially kept at the optimum level), wintering in the Bahamas, and very rarely seen anywhere in between.

Once there was, no doubt, a logic to it, some reason why this otherwise rather ordinary-appearing warbler evolved itself into such ecologically reduced circumstances. But that logic lies buried in a history older than logic itself, probably having to do with glaciation, the heavings and subsidings of the earth, the spreading and disappearing of certain ecosystems, changes of climate, and other such greater and lesser transformations of the planet. Someday, the Kirtland's inexplicably rigid proclivities may help illustrate some bold new thesis about one chapter of the earth's unwitnessed history; someday, too, croker sacks may explain things about more recent, but still obscure, patterns of migration, settlement, and connectedness.

In the meantime, nobody doubts that the warbler ought to be preserved. The town of Mio has erected a large statue to it, and ornithologists flock to the jack-pine groves every spring. You can't erect a statue to a word, and the odds don't favor the survival of one whose currency has shrunk to so small a territory. All you can do is use it and let it take its chances along with all the rest of the words and birds in the world.

It pleases me how both the bird and the word have managed to outlast the circumstances that formed them. We think of nature and history both as belonging to the opportunists, the ones who teach us how to adapt, evolve, seize the day, or fill the niche. On the whole, we are right to think this way, but the world is also full of quirky and implausible survivors, things that still live, as neurotic people do, by a logic that eludes or defies us, because it is rooted somewhere out of sight. Their abnormality, their peculiarity, is the small aperture through which our normality gets a peek at the deeper structure of things and learns to see beyond its own conventions and assumptions.

And that, I'm sure you will agree, is enough on that subject. Everybody here sends greetings to everybody there.

Frank

OH, WHAT A THORNY BUSINESS this thing called money can be.

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There is first the consuming problem of where to put the money.

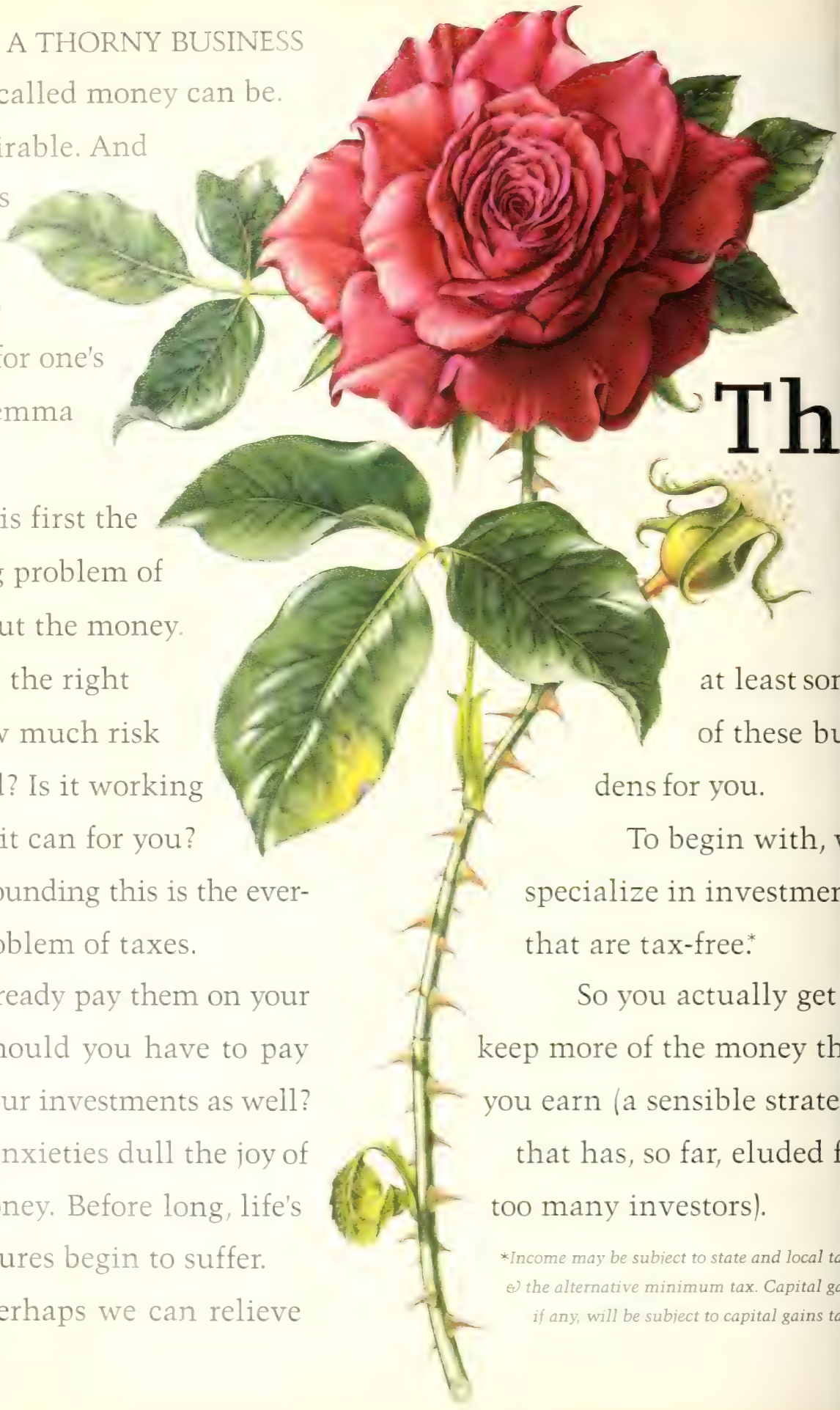
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WHO OWES WHAT TO WHOM?

This year brings with it another American bicentennial: that of the passage of the Bill of Rights. Expect nearly every politician to come forward to extol its perfection. Expect few of them, and few Americans, to recall that the bill was understood by its framers not as something to be displayed under glass but rather as lab notes for the American Experiment. The Ninth Amendment, with its protection of unenumerated rights, in effect charged us to carry on the founders' conversation.

And we did. We fought a civil war about the meaning of some rights, and, in this century, mass movements have taken our understanding of rights beyond any conception known to history. But recently, dissenters have questioned whether this expansive talk of individual rights has undermined our notions of obligation and community. What *do* we owe one another? Do we have a duty to our family? Our country? The environment? Can a country that holds rights to be self-evident even have a conversation about responsibilities? In order to prompt further discussion, *Harper's Magazine* invited five latter-day framers to Independence Hall to speculate on whether we need a Bill of Duties and to begin the task of drafting one.

The following forum was held at Independence Hall in Philadelphia in November of last year. Gerald Marzorati served as moderator.

GERALD MARZORATI
is a senior editor of Harper's Magazine.

BENJAMIN BARBER
is the Walt Whitman Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University and the director of the Walt Whitman Center at Rutgers. His books include Strong Democracy *and* The Conquest of Politics.

MARY ANN GLENDON
is a professor of law at Harvard University Law School. Her book Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse *will be published this spring by The Free Press.*

DAN KEMMIS
is the mayor of Missoula, Montana, and the author of Community and the Politics of Place.

CHRISTOPHER LASCH
is a professor of history at the University of Rochester. His most recent book, The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics, *was published in January by W. W. Norton.*

CHRISTOPHER D. STONE
is a professor of law at the University of Southern California Law Center and is the author of the book Earth and Other Ethics.

The Origins of Duty

GERALD MARZORATI: I recently came upon this quotation from Alexis de Tocqueville: "When the world was under the control of a few rich and powerful people, they liked to entertain the sublime conception of the duties of man." It seems that the subject of duty is being entertained once again in the ongoing conversation that is our democracy. William F. Buckley Jr. has recently published a book on the subject. In numerous articles, writers have argued that the vocabulary of rights is nearly exhausted and that a vocabulary of responsibilities has yet to emerge. Has our country experienced an authentic decline in "civic virtue," the communitarian spirit? Is this debate simply one of America's periodic spasms of self-criticism about its essentially individualist, self-interested soul? Or is the whole notion of duty a kind of ruse: Tocqueville, for instance, ended the passage I quoted by stating that those who speak of duty are merely interested in its "utility."

DAN KEMMIS: Unfortunately, we have come to think of democracy as the ongoing answer to a question that might be phrased, "What do you want?" Rousseau warned that this kind of democracy wouldn't work. What we have to ask is not what do we want as individuals but what do we will as a people, what do we will our common world to be?

MARY ANN GLENDON: A useful analogy may be to the natural environment. For most of our history we seemed to be endowed with inexhaustible social and natural resources. Only recently, with consumer capitalism well advanced, with our heterogeneous population growing even more diverse, have we sensed that we've been consuming our social capital without replenishing it. While rights have been proliferating, we have paid little attention to the seedbeds of civic virtue from which rights derive their surest protection. Now we are beginning to sense this erosion, and it scares us. People for the American Way recently completed a survey of the political attitudes of young Americans. The students were asked, "What makes America special?" Overwhelmingly, the young people answered, "Our rights and freedoms," which they characterized in a way that classical philosophers would recognize not as liberty but as license. People for the American Way, a group not noted for worrying about excessive liberty, said it's time to sound the alarm that America's youth has learned only half of the democratic equation: They have almost no sense of civic participation and responsibility. By the way, 7 percent mentioned that America is a democracy.

BENJAMIN BARBER: At least 7 percent got it right—

there's more to democracy than voting.

GLENDON: Well, actually some of them said, "Democracy and rock and roll."

CHRISTOPHER D. STONE: Remember when John Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country"? At the time, the remark backfired. The commentary that followed argued that government was our servant and that Washington ought to help us out, not demand anything *from* us.

KEMMIS: Precisely. The sentiments of responsibility can't be felt on a national level. But on the local level, in the daily lives of most people and in their associations — where the real work of society gets done—people recognize duties among themselves. For example, a PTA decides that it's going to build a new playground at the neighborhood school, and the organizers ask you to put in a day of work. If you say you're going to be there, then you'll be there. If you're not, then the whole thing falls apart. There's an understanding that you have a duty to do what you said you would do.

STONE: Those are called "voluntary duties," though. There are lots of duties that arise when we make a promise or a vow. But we've got to distinguish those from so-called natural duties, duties that would fall on every citizen irrespective of their signaling any willing commitment.

KEMMIS: What we've done in America consistently, Christopher, is make that distinction, and I think it's false. We call these obligations "voluntary duties" or "voluntary associations." Tocqueville didn't call them "voluntary associations"; he called them "public associations," because he recognized that in taking on such duties people were engaging in a public act. We no longer recognize that public arena. We now talk about such work taking place in the *private* sector. But a duty has to exist in the context of a community. One has to feel the heat of duty—to know that one has made a promise, that others are depending on one's virtue. Consider the last, overlooked lines of the Declaration of Independence. The signers outlined their intentions and then concluded, "We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor." It's the capacity for this kind of mutual pledging and mutual understanding that we have largely lost.

MARZORATI: The founders did not draft a Bill of Duties. But there is evidence that they assumed a certain level of duty. I have another quotation, this one from James Madison. He said, "No theoretical checks, no form of government can render us secure. To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people is a chimerical idea." In effect, the drafters didn't believe that the mechanics of a constitution were enough to secure our liberty. There had to be civic virtue. What has happened since then?

CHRISTOPHER LASCH: Much of what was considered a citizen's duty was built upon the Jeffersonian assumption of a broad distribution of property ownership, especially agrarian property. The management of property was believed to confer the habits of initiative, enterprise, and responsibility, which were essential to citizenship. But industrialism gave rise to a class of permanent, *propertyless* wage earners, estranged by their condition from the wellspring of civic virtue: proprietorship. How Jeffersonian virtue can be reconciled with this unforeseen development remains a problem no one has resolved.

The culture of consumption has made this problem even more complicated. The rise of consumerism in this century — in which the individual's self-interest is the *only* good — created a society in which you don't need any public consensus as long as the economy can satisfy people's needs and expand them into ever increasing levels of desire and expectation. Beguiled by the prospect of limitless abundance, Americans came to believe that it was no longer necessary to grapple with underlying issues of justice and equality as long as the goods kept coming.

KEMMIS: The reason the ideal broke down was because classical republican theory held that the civic virtue needed to sustain a government emerged from participation and face-to-face contact. By definition, the "republic" had to be a small-scale polity.

The breakdown, in fact, began with the events in this room in the summer of 1787. The drafters came here not to continue a republic but to create a nation. And that nation was, even then, bigger than anything any republican ever believed could sustain the necessary interaction of democracy.

GLENDON: In the founding documents and throughout the nineteenth century there is very little rhetoric about duty at the highest public level. In the legal system, duties and rights are just two sides of the same coin. But for most of our history, and even now, which is why we are here today, we have not had a well-developed public language of responsibility to match our language of rights.

BARBER: Mary Ann, the language of duty was part of the language of civic culture rather than of government administration and of the law. The founding mission statements for American col-

leges in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries all speak of preparing young people for the duties of citizenship. Where we don't find such language is in the laws and the Constitution. The decline of civic duty begins not with the absence of rhetoric in our Constitution but with the erosion of our civic culture.

LASCH: Let me give you some duty talk from the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780. Article II: "It is the right as well as the duty of all men in society, publicly and at stated seasons, to worship the Supreme Being." Article III notes that the "happiness of a people and the . . . preservation of civil government . . . depend upon piety, religion and morality." And it requires the several towns and parishes to "make suitable provision for public worship and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily."

Whenever you read of a self-sacrificing act or hear of one, or of a duty done for duty's sake, take it to pieces and look for the real motive. It is always there.
—Mark Twain

STONE: Such sternly written duties are the exception, even in eighteenth-century constitutions. If you look at the Massachusetts Constitution, it enumerates a duty to pray, but it is clear from the context that the duty is used to justify the right of each citizen to worship according to his own conscience.

BARBER: Is this the doleful residue of Calvinism, or are some of you suggesting that it is the result of a new constitutional order?

STONE: I'm questioning how critical is it that duties be in the Constitution. The socialist constitutions typically include a duty to educate your children. We don't provide for a child's education in the Constitution, but we effectively enforce it in the law anyway.

GLENDON: The United States is something of a special case because of the increasing heterogeneity I mentioned. We have fewer common histories, traditions, religions to bind us together. We look more to the law as a carrier of certain common values and to the Constitution for the most visible expression of these common values.

KEMMIS: There are difficulties in trying to impose duties in a constitution and make them a matter of law. A constitution is something besides just the imposition of law. It is an act through which people constitute themselves as a society. But when you talk to Americans now about what the Constitution means, they say it means *rights*—period, nothing else. We are a people who hold rights. We do not conceive of ourselves as a people in any other sense whatsoever. The other day I was standing in line at a polling place, waiting to vote. One man, recognizing the mayor, waved his ballot at me and said, "I guess this is my ticket to bitch, right!" and I thought, "Ah, yes. This is our thin conception of citizenship. This is what we come to when we constitute ourselves around rights alone."

STONE: Using the law to enforce a duty has a tendency to erode the self-generation of duties. A citizen's character is not being nourished when a good civic act is made to be a duty. Take voting. In some countries, the government compels you to vote. But if liberty is to mean something, I think we should be free *not* to vote. The founders understood that liberty implied such a choice. By definition, duties are antithetical to liberty, because they oblige you to do something whether you want to or not.

BARBER: The case against compulsion is Edmund Burke's argument against the Jacobins: At the end of the groves of *their* academy, Burke said, stands only the gallows. If you try to enforce duty only by the sword of state, you never create a moral being who has any interest in compliance or who feels obligated to do anything other than simply avoid the penalties of law. Again, that is a pinched form of citizenship.

The fact is, historically, if we can't repair the infrastructure of the civic culture, then we find ourselves settling for compensatory strategies. One such strategy is compensatory altruism, favored by such deep political philosophers as John D. Rockefeller Sr. and Ronald Reagan. Rockefeller's premise was, We can all be selfish six days a week, but one day a week we perform a little community service. Rockefeller made a lot of money, and he gave a little away when he was older. The language of duty tripped easily off the tongues of Gilded Age capitalists, particularly toward the end of their lives. The Reagan interpretation of this school of thought held that if you extend your greedy pursuits to the seventh day and we catch you, we may sentence you to so many weekends of community service. Civic virtue is now a punishment for a little too much greed. The trouble is that neither of those compensatory strategies really works very well. The real question is, Can we reknit our civic culture? If we can't, I despair of a solution.

STONE: You see Rockefeller's notion as "compensatory," Ben. I see it as preemptive—preempting Congress from taking his money from him through a graduated income tax.

MARZORATI: I sense that some of the discontent, and even shame, about our lack of civic duty—at least as reflected in recent writings on creat-

ing a national service and the like—stems from the outpouring of democratic spirit in Eastern Europe. Across the oceans, the politics seem so animated, and ours seems bloodless and bogged down from inertia. I think of someone like Václav Havel, who recently addressed his own people to tell them that all Czechoslovaks bear a responsibility for what happened to them in the last forty-five years. None of those young people Mary Ann referred to ever had a president charge them to assume responsibility.

BARBER: Jimmy Carter tried to talk like that in his famous "malaise" speech in 1979. Havel received standing ovations for his remarks; Carter was banished from government.

STONE: Weren't those revolutions in Eastern Europe in fact fueled by a rejection of certain onerous duties? Wasn't our own revolution a war against a lot of duties—the duty to pay taxes, the duty to bear certain burdens, like quartering troops, without any choice of compensation?

BARBER: It is true that America's rights language was invented and deployed in a period of dissent. It's a language that does allow you to rebel against an illegitimate authority in order to create freedom and equality. Our problem today is that we continue to speak this eighteenth-century language when there is no longer an obviously *illegitimate* authority to oppose.

MARZORATI: Would a lesbian activist say that?

BARBER: To the extent that there are people who are not yet part of the system, rights language continues to be not only appropriate but also the most successful language, from the Civil War amendments down to the language used by gay and lesbian groups and other groups who want in. But to refute Christopher Stone's observation that the American Revolution was a rejection of duty, remember that the cry was not "no taxation"; it was "taxation *without representation* is tyranny." The colonists acknowledged their duties but felt that it was unfair to carry them out without corresponding rights. The linkage between duties and rights has been sev-

> THE LANGUAGE OF DUTY TRIPPED EASILY OFF THE TONGUES OF GILDED AGE CAPITALISTS, PARTICULARLY AT THE END OF THEIR LIVES.
>
> —BENJAMIN BARBER

ered so completely that today the Colonial pamphleteer James Otis might be yelling "representation without taxation!" That is what most Americans want, and that is the only promise in the last decade that any politician has made.

A Duty to Family

MARZORATI: The Industrial Revolution transformed local economies into a national one. The Great Depression represented a devastating collapse of this new national economy, and any hope it had of recovery required the intervention of national government. At least since the New Deal, the federal government has been woven into the nation's economy, and few argue that it could now be extricated from the workings of the economy. Perhaps one can argue that the nation's civil society has suffered a similar depression, that the crisis demands intervention, that we need a codified set of civic obligations—something like a Bill of Duties. Let's try to imagine such a bill and the sectors of civil society it might pertain to. How about beginning with the family. How might we phrase a constitutional duty devoted to family?

GLENDON: One of the striking differences between the American Constitution and the constitutions of other modern democracies is that ours has no mention of the family. Our eighteenth-century statesmen probably thought they could take families for granted, whereas the constitutions of most other liberal democracies were written in the rubble of World War II, when families had been devastated.

I don't think we could copy what some Western European countries do and say, "Marriage and family are under the special protection of the state." But we could recognize a special collective responsibility toward child-raising families. Some of the European constitutions say "toward motherhood and children." My language for Article I of a constitutional amendment on family duty might be: "The nation has a special responsibility for the protection and welfare of children and their families." And Article II might read: "The nurture and education of children are duties primarily incumbent on the parents."

LASCH: That amendment is a blocker. My amend-

ment would read: Article I: "Fathers have the responsibility to marry the mothers of their children—"

BARBER: That's outrageous!

GLENDON: What if the mother doesn't want the marriage?

LASCH: "—and to contribute a fair share to their children's support unless the mothers release them from these obligations."

Article II: "Marriage should be undertaken only by those who view it as a lifelong commitment and are prepared to accept the consequences, foreseeable and unforeseeable, of such a commitment. No state shall pass laws authorizing divorce for any but the weightiest reasons. In the case of couples with children under the age of twenty-one, divorce is hereby forbidden."

> IF WE CAN ELEVATE THE DUTY TO FAMILY TO A CONSTITUTIONAL LEVEL, THEN THE HIGHER GOALS OF FAMILY WILL NOT BE MERELY WINDY POLITICAL RHETORIC THAT BLOWS THROUGH EVERY TWO TO FOUR YEARS.
>
> —MARY ANN GLENDON

BARBER: Let me sidestep for a minute the *obviously* controversial. There are still two major problems. Both Mary Ann and Christopher address the erosion of the family. But the very erosion that troubles both of you began with the modern lack of agreement about what a family *is*. Even with the relatively uncontroversial language that Mary Ann introduces, I suspect a great many Americans are going to say, "That doesn't include me; that puts me in a second-class citizenship category; I'm in a family, even though I don't have children." The very forces that created the problem will resist the solutions set out in your amendments. The second line of criticism I have is Burkean. Legislating these things from above may actually contribute to weakening further the impulses of, say, husbands to take responsibility for their children.

MARZORATI: Wait a minute. Most states already coerce you to keep your kid in school up to a certain age. There's little hue and cry about this demand. People aren't saying that because they are made to send their children to school that they insist on a right not to educate them at all.

BARBER: There's an extensive conservative argument, for which I have some sympathy, that says it's precisely the state's assuming these paternalistic functions—telling people what families are, issuing instructions about how to run a family, taking the children away from the family when the state decrees that the children aren't being properly cared for—that has contributed to the erosion of a sense of family responsibility. There are other nongovernmental influences contributing to this erosion, but my question is: Does government intervention compensate for that erosion or contribute to it by punishing wayward fathers and mothers for failing to live up to their obligations?

GLENDON: Let's not discuss the function of the law as merely punishments and sanctions. Another function of the law, especially at the constitutional level, is educational and symbolic: to state prominently a society's central commitments. The Preamble to the Constitution and the entire Declaration of Independence are not self-executing law. They perform a hortatory function. They articulate the broader ideas around which we the people "constitute" ourselves as a political society. The main difference between Christopher Lasch's language and my own is that mine is more in the hortatory mode, deliberately general, and leaves such things as Christopher proposes to be worked out at the state or local level.

LASCH: Exhortation probably isn't enough in this case, unless it is backed up by a few sanctions. But I don't intend to dismiss the hortatory value of laws in expressing the underlying ethical norms on which people are able to agree—which is why such matters as the definition of the family shouldn't be left to the private decision of individuals.

STONE: Another problem is that your language, Mary Ann, is easily mirrored in rights language. Couldn't we also be discussing a bill of rights for children?

GLENDON: I prefer a language of duties, because when you say that "children have rights," you're really just saying the state or a parent is going to assert them. It is better to talk about the responsibilities of the community to children or the responsibilities of parents to children. But the main reason my language is so general is that at a constitutional level, what's important is to put the concept of "family" in play in the same way that "liberty" and "equality" are in play. If we can accomplish that through this Bill of Duties,

then we might think about the goal of family protection not as windy political rhetoric that blows through every two or four years but as an ongoing fundamental value, guiding the formation of policy at all levels.

MARZORATI: I wonder why so much of this discussion has been about punishments and sanctions. Isn't there a long history in this country of trying to coax people into doing certain things and then rewarding them? If you sign up for the army or air force, you have access to a veterans' hospital and the GI Bill. Why not offer parents interest-free loans for their child's college education or perhaps insure the bank deposits of those who stick out their marriages and raise their kids?

LASCH: My reservations about using entitlements as inducements are similar to those expressed by Mary Ann regarding rights. Recipients of entitlements, like rights bearers, are regarded as autonomous individuals, and that is precisely the style of thinking we are trying to avoid.

BARBER: Exactly. The problem of resorting to the law, any kind of law, in a modern constitutional liberal democracy is that the central character becomes the "legal person" and is always the most powerful entity. The standing of the family in such an arena will always be compromised by the fact that those who make up the family—child, wife, husband—have stronger legal standing as individuals than as a family. How—in a system that atomizes us, privatizes us, and rewards us as legal persons—do we reinforce social entities that are based on kinship?

GLENDON: We don't know any more about how to revitalize social environments such as the family than we know about natural environments. But we do know a little bit about how to stop harming these environments. One thing that is missing from our family policy is any national, coherent commitment to it. In our federal system most family law is fashioned at the state level. Christopher Lasch mentions divorce law. In European countries divorce law is nationwide; divorce reform engenders a vigorous democratic discussion, on national television and in all the newspapers. Here, where it's state by state, the issues Christopher raises do not command national attention.

STONE: But state by state allows for more liberty too. Quickie divorces originated in Nevada at a time when it was very hard to get divorces in other states. So you get, as you do in corporate law, a certain competition among the states that produces different patterns and opportunities.

BARBER: Federalism enhances liberty only if everybody has equal physical mobility; that is, the wealth needed to move from state to state to obtain those benefits. If you don't have mobility, you have less liberty, not more.

GLENDON: That is why the federal government got active in child support and why we now have, finally, long after most other countries, vigorous enforcement of child-support obligations—thanks only to federal intervention.

LASCH: The assessment here of the state of our knowledge about families is too modest. We know more than you all are asserting. We know, for example, that divorce is bad for kids. There's no question about that.

GLENDON: Christopher, restricting divorce will not prevent parents from separating. The social phenomenon is family breakdown. The legal result is divorce. You can ban divorce, but you can't make people live in the same household and be good parents.

MARZORATI: That is the central question, the age-old question, isn't it? Can we create virtue? In the case of Mary Ann's duty language, can we improve American family life simply by giving voice to the idea that it is shameful to abandon one's children? Haven't we begun to accomplish something when we the people write that idea into our Constitution? I think of Dan's example of the man who forsook his obligation to help the PTA. He broke his promise. It seems to me that if this forum were actually a constitutional convention—if there were, in fact, people gathered here to create a constitutional language for the family—it would focus the country's attention, gain media coverage, and ignite a conversation, which is, in fact, democracy at work. If there were a sense that we the people really want parents to raise their children, maybe people would be a little more hesitant about walking out, maybe they would try a little harder to patch things up.

> *I go on this great republican principle, that the people will have virtue . . . Is there no virtue among us? If there be not, we are in a wretched situation.*
>
> —James Madison

STONE: Shame is the link to virtue. But it's most effective in a small community. Relationships between people are increasingly impersonal. Shoppers now call in their credit card number rather than experience a face-to-face exchange with a storekeeper. The people who determine our environment are increasingly distant and digital. When you're not in a community that allows for that intimacy, there is little to be ashamed about and little sense of duty. Essentially, that is why we have the law. At a certain

level our values have to be enforced. Today, shame is no longer operative.

KEMMIS: Well, shame would be the only operative force in such situations. Think of pride or habit.

GREENE: Honor.

STONE: Guilt would do it. It would have in my day.

BARBER: If we believe that civic virtue is capable of making a difference in the way people behave, then we have to ask ourselves at what level it is possible or most effective to instill that civic virtue. Christopher Stone has just said what small "r" republicans always understood: that there is a scale beyond which civic virtue cannot operate. We have, as a nation, forcibly made ourselves forget that lesson. We have denied it over and over again, and we have made ourselves act as if it's possible to have a civil society, a polity, on a scale at which there is no evidence that it's possible. Now, that's injurious in a lot of different ways, but mainly it soaks up all of the resources—material and civil—that might be available at the level where such a polity *would* be possible. A necessary step toward putting such civic virtue to work is to begin to withdraw from the consensus that the nation is what we mean by a polity.

A Duty to Country

BARBER: The ideal democratic polity has been seen by every theorist, from the Greeks down to modern times, as a small rural republic or a town republic or a vibrant municipality. There's no question that at the local level democracy works naturally and works well. But it is also the case that we live in a world of institutions and problems that are not only national but also international and interdependent. Solutions that reemphasize the local level run up against the historical reality that we are a nation, as well as the facts that power is being deployed in international arenas and that reaction at the local level is ineffective. Besides, at this national level the rhetoric of duty is alive and well. Consider that the President has dispatched almost a half million American troops abroad, without congressional authorization and with considerable public discontent and a little of my own, but with an overwhelming majority agreeing that the young still have a duty to respond to the country's call.

In the spirit of the pioneer's "house raising" lies the salvation of the Republic.

—Frederick Jackson Turner

MARZORATI: Sure, Ben. How many of those troops enlisted because they wanted to serve their nation? The come-on was, "Be all that *you* can be." And how has recruitment fared since last August 2? Enlistment rates, by all accounts, have plummeted.

BARBER: For whatever reasons they enlisted, almost all have shipped out without complaint.

KEMMIS: Ben, at the level of national service, people only sense a duty to bear arms and a duty to respect the flag. Nothing else.

BARBER: But, Dan, at least on the national level, we already have a residual language of duty that we can attempt to expand. I would prefer to see this idea of duty expressed in Preamble language to avoid the paternalism of enforcement from above. I'd really hate to see a Supreme Court that spent its time enforcing duties rather than defending rights. So a duty to country might read, "The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness obligates every citizen to participate in the democratic polity that alone secures these and other rights." In more popular language, we might say, "Liberty isn't free; it's paid for in the currency of obligation." I'm trying to do what Mary Ann sought to do: not force a sense of duty through the law but create language in the law that is educational.

MARZORATI: How might this manifest itself in an actual duty?

BARBER: I've often thought that we ought to consider an anti-poll tax. In this case, the government would actually pay people to vote, just as we pay jurors a per diem.

GREENE: They used to do that in Chicago!

BARBER: Yeah, but you had to be dead. Or perhaps we reverse the logic: Certain benefits of citizenship will be *withheld* if you don't participate in national service.

STONE: In international law such negative inducements are precisely what motivate sovereign states to comply. Nations that fail their obligations are forbidden from participating in scientific conventions or from receiving the benefits of other international arrangements.

MARZORATI: How would this work at home?

STONE: Perhaps you wouldn't be allowed to vote.

GREENE: I'm not sure the deprivation of the vote would be considered a punishment in this coun-

try anymore. Perhaps you ought to consider using it as a reward.

BARBER: Maybe there could be a pass that grants access to all state and federal parklands. Obtaining the pass would be contingent upon the exercise of certain duties and obligations. These parklands wouldn't exist without an organized democratic polity, and if you didn't want to take part in the polity, fine, then you couldn't ask for access to something that the polity alone has provided.

LASCH: Why not favor a provision that simply made voting an obligation?

BARBER: In voting, a liberal democracy needs a *deliberative* citizen, not simply somebody who pulls a lever. If you force everyone to vote, you may enhance private opinion and private prejudice at the polls, which is not what a democracy is looking for.

MARZORATI: What do the small "r" republicans think about a national service?

KEMMIS: The proposal for a national service is just one more way to soak up resources at a level where they won't do good and to remove them from a level where they might. The idea of service to a polity is a good idea. But it should be service to polities that allow people to connect in meaningful ways. I agree there are problems that transcend the local level. But why do we jump to the conclusion that such issues are, by their nature, national? In most cases they are, in fact, global. I would also like to suggest that we substitute for the word "duty" the word "responsibility." Duty suggests a one-way obligation, like a debt. We lack the sense of the connectedness of the rights bearers. In the word "responsibility" we do have that sense of connectedness, the idea that here is a claim and a response to that claim—a responsibility.

GLENDON: When I tried to draft my language, I called it a Declaration of Responsibilities. I prefer "declaration" over "bill" because I prefer the hortatory mode over the coercive. And I prefer "responsibility" over "duty" for precisely the reasons you did, Dan. Before coming here, I combed the founding documents in search of duties. The only duty I could find in these documents was the duty to overthrow an oppressive government in the Declaration of Independence! But the Preamble to the Constitution does contain language that is suggestive of obligation, the commitment "to secure the blessings of liberty" not only for ourselves but for *posterity*. Perhaps the only way to reconcile Ben's proposal with Dan's is to make the commitment to civic service at the national level and the organization and fulfillment at the local level.

MARZORATI: Why wouldn't we want this national duty to be a national service, with citizens leaving their localities? Don't we want wealthy kids to leave their wealthy communities and to experience and understand that all communities are not wealthy? Don't we want black urban kids and white farm kids to mingle? Is all this talk—which you hear from many who support the idea of mandatory national service—just rhetoric?

STONE: Gerry, there is the possibility that human resources will be allocated to tasks for which they're not best suited. You may find yourself taking people who are better at being business executives or doctors and putting them into public service, building roads.

MARZORATI: But I thought we were talking about encouraging virtue. Isn't there a good in a doctor's understanding that some people in his society are making roads and for him to have this experience building roads himself so that he might better understand the road builder's life, the value of roads, the value of his country's maintaining roads?

THE PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL SERVICE IS JUST ONE MORE WAY TO SOAK UP RESOURCES AT A LEVEL WHERE THEY WON'T DO GOOD AND TO REMOVE THEM FROM A LEVEL WHERE THEY MIGHT.
—DAN KEMMIS

STONE: Yes. But there will be a conflict between maximizing virtue and maximizing production as an economist would see it. And we are a nation that has put its predominant faith into allocating human resources according to what the market regards as the best use.

BARBER: Wait. Dan's not trying to conserve these human resources from being soaked up so that they can go back home and be executives or doctors. Christopher Stone's argument against national service is the same as Oscar Wilde's argument against socialism: It takes up too many free evenings.

STONE: But Dan is saying that the sense of duty you are trying to inspire, Ben, requires a prior sense of community. And where people know their

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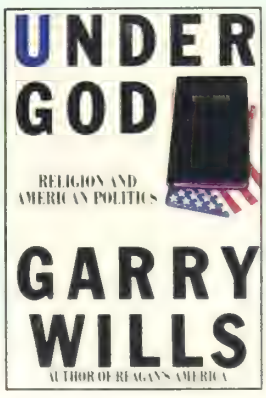
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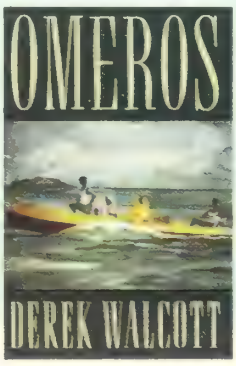
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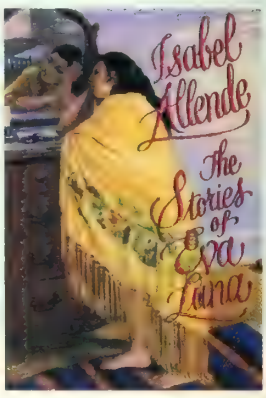
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With Lewis Lapham

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neighbors, sense a connectedness, and feel their politicians are genuinely responsible to them, then building a park or organizing a public gathering will inculcate a sense of duty at that level. Duties are apt to be spare and rarefied at the national level, such as the duty to defend one's country and to bear arms. A finer sense of duty obtains at the local level—one that calls upon your body to serve on a jury, help out in civic productions, or sit on the board of an opera company.

GLENDON: If you made service a national obligation and let people choose whether to render it locally or to see the world, then you would have achieved both ends. There are many small-town people who would like to help out in the South Bronx, as the Vista program demonstrated.

STONE: But why not simply increase taxes and pay people to perform work in the South Bronx so that those who are most inclined to do this work can choose to do it? Why do you prefer fulfilling certain functions by imposing a blanket conscription of everyone?

LASCH: Well, how do you feel about hiring substitutes when called on to do military service? There's a classic case.

MARZORATI: That's what we're doing now. Isn't a volunteer army in some sense the hiring of one class by another?

BARBER: The point of national service is not solely to solve a set of problems. We're not arguing that because our most intractable problems were not solved by throwing money at them, we will now throw free labor at them. The target of community service and national service is the attitudes and virtues of the participants in the service. This is why the issue is legislation versus education, or coercion versus persuasion. When you legislate duties, you're using penalties and sanctions to compel people to act. True, education also is a form of compulsion; we call it "authority." But we assume with young people that as they grow and come to understand what it means to belong to a community, they must assume responsibilities and exercise their liberty in a way that is responsive to the liberty of others. To "educate" in a democracy doesn't mean giving the young license and then leaving them alone. Educational authority compels our children, in the name of growth and liberty, to assume certain responsibilities, whereas legislation makes demands on fully developed human beings who, whether they like it or not, must act in certain ways.

STONE: Am I the only one here who is uneasy about the state educating its young citizens in patriotism? In my mind I think of China, of Nazi Germany, of states having kids get together in the morning and sing hymns to IBM.

BARBER: Christopher, we are nowhere near that. In China I might want to read the vote the Bill of Rights. In France today, I would not necessarily want to talk about compulsory service—they have enough compulsory bureaucracy as it is. But we're talking about the United States, with its language of rights and obsession with privatization. I think we can stand a fairly strong dose of . . . call it patriotic rhetoric, duties rhetoric, responsibility rhetoric, education-for-liberty rhetoric, without singing hymns to IBM. Somewhere down the line you might find me saying, "Enough talk of duty, let's have some more rights talk." But that's hardly our problem now.

LASCH: Will we have more than talk about duties, which is part of my uneasiness with all this Preamble-like writing? Does everything just continue with a veneer of talk about responsibilities, or is there some compulsion? Dan, I share your view that local government is best, but some issues can be resolved only by national action, coercive action at that. The civil rights movement—the most striking example of democratic politics in our time—was solidly based on local black communities in the South. Yet its success also depended, in the final analysis, on federal legislation.

> *The publick, everywhere, is proverbially soulless. All feel when its rights, assumed or real, are invaded, but none feel its responsibilities.*
>
> —James Fenimore Cooper

KEMMIS: Yes, but let me give you an example of what I am talking about. If you survey people now about what they consider the nation's number one domestic social problem, drug abuse comes up the most often. We've addressed it as a national problem, and, by and large, our efforts have proved hopeless. On the local level, as mayor, I go to the kids in my town and say, "Like every other town in America, we've got a problem here. What should we do about it?" It's just good public policy to bring the kids into the discussion at this point, because they are going to know what's most likely to work with their peers. But such a conversation also says, in effect, "As a community, we expect you to help us solve this problem." Now, it's at that level of interaction that one can impose and expect a sense of duty. You could never pull this off on the national level, because you lose the concept of peership and the people's sense that what is really at stake is the quality of their neighborhood, their town, their place.

A Duty to Place

STONE: Well, let's talk about place for a minute. A duty to place, or the environment, or the land, is distinguishable from the other duties we have discussed. My duty to keep off your property is simply the mirror of your right of ownership. When we talk about our obligations to the oceans, or to the whales, or to future generations, there is no rights holder on the other side with the freedom to waive or sell or trade that protection. I think we do have a duty to the environment, but at the same time we should recognize that if we put ourselves under a duty to, say, whales, there is no way to sit down with whales and adjust things if the situation gets too extreme.

KEMMIS: I came across one interesting assignment of rights in Montana law recently. The Montana Floodplain and Floodway Management Act holds that a river has a right to overwhelm its banks and inundate its floodplain. Well, that's interesting, because it's not a right that we assign to the river. The river has earned it through centuries of deluging and shaping the floodplain, and the floodplain has a right to its rampaging river. They've earned their rights through a kind of reciprocal action.

STONE: We must be careful with this kind of language. The concept of rights exists within a framework of law that supplies, for example, a right to counsel.

KEMMIS: There's some usefulness in the metaphor. Missoula is where it is because of a gathering of rivers. The Clark Fork River is the most outstanding feature of my town, which we have come to realize after years of turning our back on the river. I have sometimes spoken of the river as Missoula's "oldest and wisest citizen." Now, that is metaphorical language, and yet it brings to mind the concept of inhabitation, that what calls us to political activity is our living together in a shared space. Those spaces aren't arbitrary. We are there because of the shape of the surroundings. And our relationship to the surroundings, then, is not an accidental relationship but a reciprocal one—like the river to the floodplain.

MARZORATI: Somehow I feel that we all want to promote a sense of duty, but no one, except Christopher Lasch, wants to actually create a duty. I am surprised, because the history of our country is replete with examples of our doing so. I imagine that back at the turn of the century there might have been a guy who was furious that his state government was imposing on all car drivers the duty to obtain a license before hitting the road. Did he spend nights at home wrestling with the profound questions of philosophy and issues of loss of liberty? No. He grumbled, took a test, and got his license, and came to see it as something that, community-wise, was for the best. So I wonder: What if we created a new ecological duty for, say, Missoula? Someone buys a house in town, and Dan tells him or her that before the water gets turned on, before all the governmental amenities are provided, the owner has to take a test. He must understand the ecology of the neighborhood: where the watershed is, where the garbage goes, the vicissitudes of the river, the special features of the land. Since we have made it a duty to know a certain minimal amount about car driving before you get behind a wheel, why not insist upon a similar level of competence before you get to settle in a place?

BARBER: Gerry, you have to remember that in the twentieth century, duty has to accommodate liberty. Wordsworth called duty the "stern daughter of the voice of God." Remember that, theologically, duty was what God commanded you to do, and your *autonomy* was no part of it. The modern conception of duty has to balance itself with the individual's autonomy, with human choices. This is why I prefer the word "responsibility"; it entails this accommodation. Rousseau said freedom is obedience to a law we prescribe for ourselves. Democracy provides the link between autonomy and duty that's missing in other societies and that we require in the absence of a God who can simply mandate that His will is our duty.

KEMMIS: Ben, any sense of duty or any Bill of Duties has to draw upon the notion of connectedness that is implicit in the idea of responsibility. When I was thinking about family and how we might impose a duty within that structure, I tried to imagine the family longitudinally—that is, between members of different generations. A duty to family or a duty to place must enjoin people to *remember* and to live in a way that deserves to be remembered and nurtures the practice of remembrance. Meeting in this room is a wonderful way of doing that. This conversation reminds us of the traditions out of which this gathering was born. When we think about our relationship to the environment, we should know where we are, where we come from, and then agree to live intentionally in those places in a way that will allow people to remember us well. It is when we reaffirm that compact between ourselves and our progeny that duty is born. ■

AMÉRKA, AMÉRKA

A Palestinian abroad in the Land of the Free

By Anton Shammas

Some years ago, in San Francisco, I heard the following tale from a young, American-educated Palestinian engineer. We had found a rustic, trendy place and managed to find a quiet table. Over lukewarm beers, rather than small cups of lukewarm cardamomed coffee, we talked about his family, which had wandered adrift in the Arab world for some time before finding its moorings on the West Coast, and in particular of a relative of his living to the south of San Francisco whom we were planning to visit the following day. We never did make that visit—that is a story, too—but the story about this man has fluttered inside my head ever since.

We will call him Abu-Khalil. Imagine him as a fortysomething Palestinian (he is now past sixty) whose West Bank homeland was, once again in his lifetime, caving in on him in June 1967 after what the Arabs call the Defeat of Hazieran 5 and the Israelis and Americans call the Six-Day War. Where was he to spend the occupation years of his life? Where could he get as far away from the Israeli "benign" presence as his captive mind could go? The choices were essentially two: He could cross the Allenby Bridge to His Majesty's Jordan, or he could take an unhijackable flight west, from Ben-Gurion Airport. He chose the latter, a plane that would carry him to the faraway U.S.A.—to those members of his large family (Arabs always seem to have *large* families) who had discovered the New World centuries after Columbus. (They had discovered the New World, as they would tell him later, in a sort of belated westbound revenge for the eastbound expulsion of their great ancestors from Andalusia/Spain the same year that Columbus's Spanish ships arrived on the shores of his imaginary India.)

To continue our tale: Abu-Khalil lands in San Francisco one warm September afternoon, clad in a heavy black coat that does not astonish his waiting relatives a bit, since they are familiar with the man's eccentricities. But what about the security guys at Ben-Gurion Airport? Didn't the out-of-season coat merit suspicion and a frisking? Apparently not. Abu-Khalil is, as far as I can tell, the only Palestinian to have seeped out through the thick security screenings at Ben-Gurion Airport—née Lydda—unsearched. How else to account for the fact that he had managed to carry on board with him a veritable Little Palestine—flora, fauna, and all?

Anton Shammas is the author of Arabesques, *a novel. He teaches in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan.*

THE YOUNGER AMONG US FROM PALESTINE TRAVEL LIGHT, WITH THE VANITY OF THOSE WHO THINK HOME IS A PORTABLE IDEA. FOR EVEN OUR LANGUAGE, ARABIC, HAS BEEN DE-TERRITORIALIZED BY ANOTHER



His bags were heavy with small plants and seeds that went undetected b
Israeli security. (It should be said, of course, that thyra poised to explode
not what they look for in a Palestinian's luggage at Ben-Gurion Airport
As for U.S. Customs Form 6059B, which inbound foreigners are gracious
asked to fill out before they land—it prohibits passengers from importi
"fruits, vegetables, plants, plant products, soil, meats, meat product
birds, snails, and other live animals and animal products"—our passenge
to the best of the storyteller's authorial knowledge (and mine), could n
read English, and no American officer, lawful or otherwise, bothered
verify his declarations—albeit not made—through questioning, much le
through physical search, these being two procedures that Palestinians a
much accustomed to in their comings and goings in the Middle East.

So that's how Abu-Khalil managed to bring to California some repr
sentative plants of Palestine, many still rooted in their original, fecun
soil. It seems, however, that he took pride mainly—think of it as a feath
in his kaffiyeh—in his having managed to smuggle out of the West Ban
through Israel, and into the United States seven representative birds of h
homeland. The duri, the hassoun, the sununu, the shahrur, the bulbu
the summan, and the hudhud, small-talk companion to King Solom
himself—they all surrounded him now in California, re-chirping Palestir
away in his ears from inside their unlocked American cages. "They will n
leave their open cages," Abu-Khalil would say, or so the story went, "till
leave mine."

Abu-Khalil's was a cage of his own making; he has not left it to this ve
day. But I was mainly interested in the birds, in their mute, wondrous m
gration. In the years that followed, I asked the storyteller, did they forg
their mother chirp? Did they eventually adopt the mellow sounds of Cal
fornia? And how, I asked, did he manage to smuggle in these birds in th
first place? "Well," said my friend, "he had a coat of many pockets, yo
see."

I found the story hard to believe at the time; but one has to trust th
storyteller, even a Palestinian. After all, where else coul
the birds of Palestine go "after the last sky," in the words
the poet Mahmoud Darwish, but to the Land of the Free

My storyteller and I belong to a different generation from Abu
Khalil's. We, and others like us, are too young to think of smuggling roo
and soil, though not young enough to forget all about the birds we le
behind. We travel light, empty-pocketed, with the vanity of those wh
think home is a portable idea, something that dwells mainly in the mind o
within a text. Celebrating the modern powers of imagination and of fic
tion, we have lost faith in our old idols—memory, storytelling. We are n
even sure anymore whether there ever was a home out there, a territory,
homeland. We owe allegiance to no memory; and we have adopted as ou
anthem Derek Walcott's perhaps too-often-quoted line: "I had no natio
now but the imagination." Our language, Arabic, was de-territorialized b
another, and only later did we realize that Arabic does not even have
word for "territory." The act of de-territorialization, then, took place out
side our language, so we could not talk, much less write, about our plight i
our mother tongue. Now we need the language of the Other for that, th
language that can categorize the new reality and sort it out for us in uppe
and lower cases; the language that can re-territorialize us, as imaginary a
that might be, giving us some allegedly solid ground. It is English for m
San Francisco storyteller-friend, French for others, Hebre
for me: the unlocked cages of our own choices. In short, w
are Palestine's post–Abu-Khalilians, if you like.

Many Middle Eastern Abu-Khalils have immigrated to th
U.S.A. over the years, driven out of their respective homelands by wars
greedy foreigners, and pangs of poverty. At the turn of the century, whe

Illustrations by Peter Sı

Ottomans—who had been ruling the Middle East since 1517—were
ticing some refined forms of their famine policy, Arabs left their homes
families and sailed to the Americas. Brazil and Argentina had their
rm; Michigan, too. Today, Michigan is home to the largest Arab
erican community in North America. If you were to take a stroll
ugh the streets of Dearborn, a south-by-southwest suburb of Detroit,
signs and names might remind you of some ancient legend.

Bereft of names and deeds, these Arabs came to Michigan to make
ies for themselves as a twentieth-century self-mocking variation on the
Mesopotamian tradition of the *shuma shakanu*, the preservation of one's
ie and deeds. That also was the original aim of those who followed
nrod the Hunter in his biblical endeavor to reach heaven and said, "Let
nake us a name for ourselves" (Gen. 11:4). An American heaven of
s and, in this case, an American name; no concealed Nimrods.

Hoping for a happier ending than the biblical one, they have come from
ces whose names Mark Twain, the great American nomenclator, travel
with "the innocents abroad" some 123 years ago, found impossible to
nounce. "One of the great drawbacks to this country," he wrote in Sep-
ber 1867, from Palestine, "is its distressing names that nobody can get
hang of. . . . You may make a stagger of pronouncing these names, but
y will bring any Christian to grief that tries to spell them. I have an idea
t if I can only simplify the nomenclature of this country, it will be of the
atest service to Americans who may travel here in the future."

This may account for the notorious Hollywood tradition, many years
er tongue-in-cheek Twain, of assuming that all men Middle Eastern—if
tunate enough to actually have names of their own in the films—should
called Abdul. (In fact, Abdul is but the first half of a common Middle
stern compound.) So all these anonymous Abduls are here now, trying,
far away from home, to complete their names, in a new world that has
en practicing the renaming of things now for five centuries and
inting.

Twain might have bumped into the grandfathers of these Arab-
nericans. The Arabs he happened upon reminded him "much of
lians," watching the innocents' every motion with "that vile, uncom-
ining impoliteness which is so truly Indian, and which makes a white
n so nervous, and uncomfortable and savage that he wants to extermi-
te the whole tribe." Luckily enough, perhaps because they'd already had
too many Indians of their own, the Americans did not see the Indians of
e Middle East as their burden (as did the Europeans) until it was almost
o late for brazen, self-assertive colonialism. Twain could wax a little
hite Man's Burdenish, though, as when he wrote: "These people are nat-
ılly good-hearted and intelligent, and with education and liberty, would
a happy and contented race."

"Education"? Maybe. "Liberty"? Well, not yet. "Happy"? Happiness in
e Middle East is not something that you pursue as if it were a round, stiff
ta tossed about like a Frisbee. Paradoxically enough (which Twain
ight have appreciated), the place where these Oriental Indians have been
ost likely to find "education and liberty" has been the United States,
here they have also been able to feel if not exactly "happy" then at
least—in the words of Was (Not Was)—"better than James
Brown" and much, much better than all the James Browns
of Detroit.

America's debut in the Middle East was made some decades before
wain, in the 1820s, when the blue-eyed American Protestant missionar-
s in Lebanon started the big project—even in American terms—of con-
erting the infidels of the Levant to Christianity and translating the
hristian Bible into Arabic. One Dr. Eli Smith took the latter endeavor
on himself and even decided, in 1839, to cast the Arabic letters to be
ed in the printing process. In 1857, Dr. Smith passed away, survived

MICHIGAN IS HOME TO THE LARGEST ARAB AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA. IF YOU WERE TO TAKE A STROLL THROUGH THE STREETS OF DEARBORN, THE SIGNS MIGHT REMIND YOU OF SOME ANCIENT LEGEND

TWAIN DESCRIBED PALESTINE AS "THE MOST HOPELESS, DREARY, HEARTBROKEN PIECE OF TERRITORY." TO THE PALESTINIAN EAR THIS SOUNDS LIKE A ROUGH DRAFT OF THE FAMOUS ZIONIST SLOGAN "A LAND WITHOUT A PEOPLE, TO A PEOPLE WITHOUT A LAND"

only by the books of Genesis and Exodus in Arabic translation. There w no grace in Smith's Arabic letters; no grace in his translation (complet by others), though he had sought the assistance of some of the most br liant Arab linguists of the time.

I came across Smith's translation anew the other day at the University Michigan's graduate library; the language reminded me of Twain's descri tion of Palestine. "Of all the lands on earth for dismal scenery," Twa wrote, "I think Palestine must be the prince. The hills are barren, they a dull of color, they are unpicturesque in shape. . . . It is the most hopele dreary, heartbroken piece of territory out of Arizona." Of course, to t Palestinian ear Twain's observation sounds like a rough draft of the famo Zionist slogan "A land without a people, to a people without a land."

I was born in that "most hopeless, dreary, heartbroken piece of territo out of Arizona," in the month of September. Come April, any America innocent abroad—perhaps a GI Gult soldier in need of R and R—could noti the almost Eliotic breeding of lilacs out of the Galilean dead land, the mi ing of memory and desire. Mr. Twain, I have been to Arizona, and, wi all due respect, Arizona ain't no Galilee.

I first saw Phoenix one steamy afternoon in November of 1981. I was my way to the Grand Canyon. Being, at the time, an official exchan visitor of the ICA (the International Communication Agency, now t United States Information Agency), I was forced, literally, to leave t serenity of Iowa City, the writer's haven, and tour the country, complyi with the stated intent of my being brought to America—to get famili with the ways of the land. My idea of seeing America was to visit émig friends I had in cities on either coast, but the ICA would have none of it. was unequivocally told that I was to "do some nature" too.

Arriving at the Phoenix airport overdressed for an Arizona November, was met by an amiable local lady. All I wanted to do was to check in at t Ramada Inn, where I could hang my black, heavily redundant coat a take a decent shower. Instead, I was congenially, but firmly, escorted the local zoo, where, under a scorching sun, I was offered the opportuni to admire three recalcitrant iguanas, five friendly snakes, and seven cact After a couple of hours I was told that my guide's father, who had so interest in things Near Eastern, was going to take me out for an early di ner, and then, maybe, I could check in. "How could anybody take me *out*, I inquired of my guide, "if I haven't been *in* yet?"

Being a Phoenix first-timer, however, I thought I would stand a gra risk of being thought impolite if I refused. So I was taken to a place call Brookshires (how could I forget?) and there had what was, and still is, t quietest, most peaceful dinner of my life (twenty-three, twenty-five wor max, just the bare necessities of menu small talk, were exchanged). A ni old man, taciturn—in the good sense of the word—he was.

Then, around eight, I finally reached the hotel and ended up in a roo on the first floor, just off the swimming pool. (I should have shown up i the early afternoon if I wanted a better room.) This was not exactly my id of peace and privacy, but it was one of those days. I took my long, lon overdue shower, then tried to open the huge sliding door so that I could g out and relax for a while near the pool. After some futile attempts, an almost on the verge of giving up, the phone rang, and on the other en of the line a woman's friendly voice said, "Hi, this is the front desk. All yo need to do is remove the stick off the door's track." Which, embarrasse I did.

A drink in hand, like any good tourist, I was watching the tranquil Ar zona skies when a young black guy came by and started cleaning the po with a net attached to a long rod. I remember thinking: What would th tool be called in English, let alone Arabic or Hebrew? Then I noticed, a he did, that the sounds I thought were coming from the sieved water wer actually something else. The courtyard was surrounded by numerous slidin doors, curtained or otherwise, and it was hard to determine, engulfed i

ispers and echoes, where exactly the sounds were coming from. But it ned out to be merely a net-throw away: a couple, ever so gently, making e. In a sudden ruse of discretion, we immediately retreated. I was no sooner back in my room when the phone rang, and what I thought was the same receptionist's voice, without identifying itself this time, abruptly said, "There's America for ya."

From Fassuta, my small village in the Galilee, émigrés went mainly to zil and Argentina. My grandfather and his brothers and brother-in-law for Argentina in 1896, only to return home, empty-handed, a year lat Then, on the eve of the First World War, my grandfather tried his luck in, this time on his own, heading once more to Argentina (at least t's what he told my grandmother the night before he took off), where vanished for about ten years, leaving behind three daughters and ee sons, all of them hungry. His youngest son, my uncle Jiryes, followed his footsteps in 1928, leaving his wife and child behind, never to ne back.

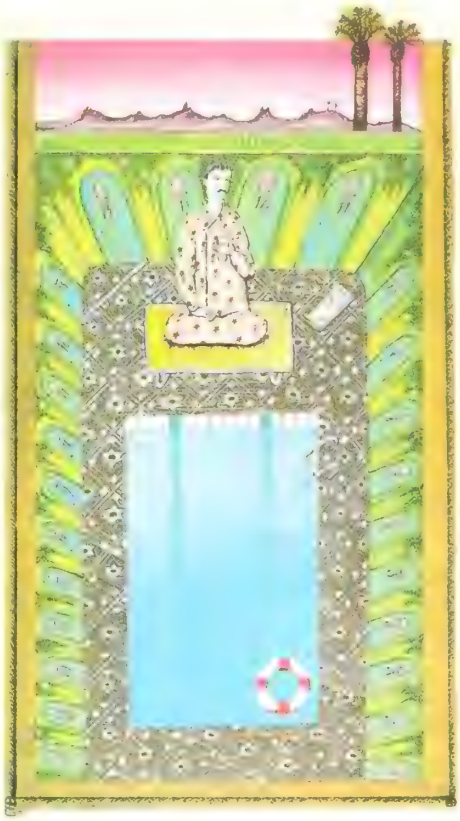
One of my childhood heroes, an old villager whom we, the children of suta, always blamed for having invented school, had actually been to t Lake City. I don't have the foggiest idea what he did there for three rs before the Depression; his deeds remain a sealed and, I suspect, quite ty book, but he certainly did not betray the Catholic faith, no sir. I still nember him in the late 1950s, breathing down my neck during Mass at village's church. He used to wear impeccable white American shirts ler his Arab *abaya*, even some thirty years after he had returned to the lage. But that was the only American fingerprint on him; the rest was ddle Eastern.

The most famous American immigrant from my village, though, was M., aunt Najeebeh's brother-in-law, Najeebeh being my father's sister. I te to be finicky about the exact relationship, but that is simply the way it n Arabic: There are different words to refer to the father's and the moths side of the family. At any rate, M. left the village in the early 1920s and ne back to visit his brothers some forty years later, with his non-Arabic-aking sons. As a matter of fact, he was the only one of a long, winding e of immigrants who had really made it, or "had it fixed," as the Galilees would say. He came to own a chain of fast-food restaurants, quite famous in the Midwest. Before I myself left the Mideast for these parts, I nt to see his nephews—my cousins—in the village and promised them, der oath, that I would certainly look M. up one day and introduce myf, or at least pop into one of his restaurants and, naturally, ask for a free eal. I have not yet done the former and am still keeping the latter for a ny Michigan day. However, whenever I come across his chain's emblem, plump plastic boy holding a plate high above his plumpily combed head, I nember my late aunt Najeebeh and think how disconcerted she would be had she known what kind of a mnemonic-device-in-the-form-of-a-cultural-shock she had become for her nephew, in faraway Amérka, as it is called in my part of the world.

Upon first arriving in Amérka, one of my first cultural shocks was e otherwise trivial American fact that shirts had not only a neck size but so a sleeve size. Fassuta's Salt Lake City visitor and I, we both come from culture where, insofar as shirts are concerned, one's arm length doesn't atter much. People in the Middle East are still immersed in figuring out e length of their postcolonial borders, personal and otherwise, and all dications show that a long time will elapse before they start paying attenon to the lonely business of their sleeve size.

Which may or may not have something to do with the fact that in a lture with an oral background of storytelling, where choices continue, ren in postcolonial times, to be made for you (be they by God, fate, nare, or the ruler), you don't enjoy the luxuries of the novel's world, where

THE MOST FAMOUS AMERICAN IMMIGRANT FROM MY VILLAGE IN THE GALILEE CAME TO OWN A CHAIN OF FAST-FOOD RESTAURANTS, QUITE FAMOUS IN THE MIDWEST



WHAT PEOPLE IN PLACES LIKE THE MIDDLE EAST ARE STRUGGLING TO DO, I THINK, IS TO SHRUG OFF THE BONDAGE OF THEIR MEMORY



characters make their own choices and have to live, subsequently, with t consequences, sleeve size and all. The storyteller's world revolves arou memory; the novelist's, around imagination. And what people in pla like the Middle East are struggling to do, I think, is to shrug off the bo age of their memory and decolonize their imagination. So, in this rega for a Middle Easterner to have a sleeve size would be a sign of such decolonization.

My first stroll ever on American soil took place in a park along the Io River, in Iowa City. I was thirty years old, and there were so many thing had not seen before. On that day I saw my first squirrel. There are ma jitterty, frail creatures in the Middle East, but, to the best of my zoologi knowledge, there are no squirrels. However, people do talk of the *sinja* the squirrelish color. I remember thinking, during my walk, that if th were no squirrels in the Middle East, how come the Arabs use the w *sinjabi*?

Not long after the day I took my walk, I found out, as I had expect that there were *sinjabs* in Iran and that the word *sinjabi* was derived fr the Persian, a language that had given Arabic, long before the Koran, many beautiful words. Some 1,300 years later, at the very time of my s in Iowa, the Ayatollah Khomeini was busy squirreling away some id about a new order, about the Mesopotamian tradition of the *shuma s kanu*. A half-world away, Salman Rushdie was, apparently, squirrel away some counter-ideas of his own. It was not hard imagine, later, who would play the Crackers, and who— on whose—Nuts.

My Galilean friend J., not to be confused with the biblical a thor, came to America some sixteen years ago. We'd met at the Hebr University in Jerusalem, in the early Seventies. He was my instructor the Introduction to Arabic Literature course, and I'm still indebted to h for teaching me the first steps of academic research and, most important for being so decent a friend as to have unabashedly explained to me hov would never have the proper discipline.

At that time he was mulling over the idea that he should perhaps co to this country to work on a Ph.D. in modern Arabic literature. Once had made up his mind, he started frantically looking for a wife with wh to share the burden of American self-exile. I asked him once whether wouldn't be wiser to find himself an already naturalized American lady, which he replied: "I'm looking for a woman that when I put my weary he against her arm, I want to hear her blood murmuring in Arabic." He d eventually find one, and they both immigrated to Amérka and have be happily listening to each other's blood ever since.

J. was looking for the blood tongue, for the primordial language, where the names of things, long before the confusion of tongues, were so deep lodged in the things they designated that no human eye could decipher t sign. Had he been a Cabalist, he would have believed that what God intr duced into the world was written words, not murmurings of blood. But came from the oral Middle East to the literate West, and he knew up arriving in Amérka that he would be expected to trade in his moth tongue and keep the secret language circulating only in his veins.

I saw the already "naturalized" J. again, in Jerusalem, some ten yea after he'd left. At the end of a very long night of catching up, he picked a Hebrew literary magazine from my desk and browsed through it. Som thing caught his eye; he paused for a moment. "What is *this* doing here "This" turned out to be an ad for a famous Israeli brand of women's unde wear. I wasn't sure what he meant. It was a full-page ad, an exact replica the famous photograph of Marilyn Monroe standing on a grate in t street, her dress blowing above her waist. "You know what the reference to, right?" I asked. No, he did not. And I thought, How could a bright g like J. live for so long in the U.S.A., be an *American citizen*, and not

liar with what I thought were the basics of American iconography?
had been settled for a year in Ann Arbor when I went to visit J. and his
in Ohio. Having just returned from a short visit to our Galilee home, I
ught J., who has a green thumb, what he had asked me to: some local
peas for his thriving backyard garden. We were reminiscing late at
t, with Fayruz, the famous Lebanese singer, on the stereo in the back-
nd and some Middle Eastern munchies on the coffee table, when I
lenly remembered that night in Jerusalem years before and the ad with
Marilyn knockoff. It would be nice if you did recognize the American
, I thought to myself, but it is nice too that you can live in this country
for decades without being forced to go native. You can al-
ways pick up your own fold of the huge map and chart your-
self into it.

Now it is my fourth year in Ann Arbor. I moved in early in Sep-
ber of 1987, and for three months my relationship with the squirrels
ide my window was quite good. "Quite good," as my English professor
ie Hebrew University in Jerusalem used to say, means "yes, good, but
e's no need to be so excited about it." So I was developing an unexcit-
relationship with these creatures, especially with one of them, whom I
myself I was able to tell from the others, although they all did look
e, if I may say so without prejudice. Anyway, I would open the door
y in the morning to pick up the *New York Times* from the doorstep, and
would be goofing around its blue, transparent wrap (that's how the pa-
is home-delivered in Michigan), unalarmed by my invasion of *his*
gdom.

ut one morning, as I reached down for the paper, he froze, all of a
den, in the middle of one of his silly gesticulations, gaping at me in utter
or, and then fled away as if I were about to—well, throw a stone at him.
be it was a morning in December 1987, and he had peeked at the
es. Maybe I will never cease to look east for my images and metaphors.
or J., for my friend in San Francisco, for me, the Old World will never
se to hold us hostage in this way. Sometimes I think that no matter how
p I have traveled *into* the American life, I still carry my own miniature
u-Khalils in my pockets and a miniature Middle East in my mind. There
ttle space for Amérka in the most private of my maps.

And speaking of maps, how many adult Americans know where the
artbroken piece of territory" Mark Twain was talking about actually is?
Arizona, for that matter?)

Still, would it matter if they did?

I don't think it would. After all, modern colonialism (sometimes eu-
mistically referred to as "our American interests"), unlike its old-
ioned, European counterpart, is not geographically oriented. Geo-
phical literacy is defunct; its demise was caused by the invention of the
ote control. And if you happen to live in this vast country, your sense
geography is necessarily numbed by what Aldous Huxley would have
led one's "local validity." Paradoxically, the vastness of the land pro-
es Americans with a continental alibi. A look at the map of the U.S.A.
m, say, a Palestinian point of view would psychologically suffice to make
lear-cut distinction between the American people and their govern-
nt's policy. Unlike England, for instance, where every Brit seems to be
ing in London and has something or another to do with the business of
ming the rather rusty machinery of a worn-out colonialism, there is an
er distinction when it comes to the United States between the Ameri-
s of Capitol Hill and the *real* Americans who, on a good day, want
solutely nothing to do with Washington's follies.

Maybe that's why Abu-Khalil can feel at home in California, surrounded
the artifacts of his lost Palestine. This country is *big;* it has enough room
t only for the newcomers but also for their portable homelands. Among
ner achievements, Amérka has made homesickness obsolete. ■

MAYBE I WILL NEVER CEASE TO LOOK EAST FOR MY IMAGES AND METAPHORS, NO MATTER HOW DEEP I HAVE TRAVELED INTO THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

DO YOU HEAR YOUR MOTHER TALKING?

By William Kittredge

They offered me work in the mill when the woods closed down, but we had enough money and I hate the cold and ringing of the night shift, everything wet and the saws howling. So I stayed home with Ruth.

This is one of those company towns, here in southern Alaska but elsewhere too, that the logging industry builds on its second-growth hillsides. You can stand at our big window and not see anything but the dripping roofs of green frame houses below us in the brush and piles of split wood covered with plastic tarps and old swing sets and wrecked cars, most of them without glass or tires, which are bright and washed in the rain, and stained with rust; and you can watch the rain dimple the puddles showing black and wet on the black asphalt, and you can wonder.

The place where Ruth parked her De Soto was empty, and I figured she must have gone down to be at the Mercantile when it opened. My Chevy four-by-four was on blocks in the shed behind the house. I thought about spending the afternoon getting it ready to ship south again.

It surprises me even now. I let the idea go through my mind with the taste of the coffee. I had wondered when I would come to feel that way. It just came to my head. I could feel myself leaving.

It was a dream in which Ruth was staying be-

William Kittredge has just completed Whole in the Sky, a memoir [illegible] to be published next year by Simon & Schuster.

hind forever. For a long moment I couldn't eve get myself to see her face, or understand how had come to this yellow-painted kitchen. Th idea of leaving just fell into me like a visitor. blew my breath on the window and rubbed n initials in the steamy place.

It was light as it was going to get. The coff was heavy and sweet, so I poured another cu and lit up another cigarette. Some days nothi moves. You can look out at the evening and s the fog that was there in the morning featherin off into the canyon where the river cuts towa the ocean.

What saved it was Ruth's old De Soto. Sh had the headlights glowing. Ruth drives slo and careful.

Outside you could hear the water in the rive I stood on the porch, holding the coffee cu and watched her park.

Ruth took a paper sack in her arms ar stepped around the puddles until she was besid me. Her hair was wet on her forehead and th shoulders of her cloth coat were soaked. Sh grinned and shoved the sack at me, and thought then I wasn't going anywhere.

During the winter Ruth can look blotchy an strange. Some nights she will go alone to movie and come back after I am sleeping. Bu she was smiling now, and I could read mysel and I had to smile.

"Turn off the headlights," I said, and I too her sack.

Ruth ran back through the rain and stuck he head inside the car door and fumbled at th

tch. Her skirt was pulled high and it stuck to backs of her legs, and I could see the dark of veins behind her knees.

The summer we met, Ruth was deep brown n the sun and her legs looked like something of pictures. She was working nights as a ktail waitress in Brownie's, where I'd seen lots of times, and sleeping away her days on

ed at going to see those kids.

She slammed the car door and came back. "I got bacon and eggs and juice," she said, taking the sack. "I'm going to cook a regular breakfast."

The fields smelled of fire. You could imagine little runs of fire burning behind the combines.



e beach. I caught her there early one morning d spoke only a few words to her that first ne. I'd woken her, not so much to start some- ing with her as interested in why these naway women act like they do. You see them the mill, dirty and wet and working too hard d determined to be single as possible.

She told me she could always sleep if she was tening to the ocean, and she smiled and dn't look unhappy with me at all. Her hair was ng and yellow and she was hard and tight ough, even after two kids, but she was a little o easy.

That was the first thing they told me about r: that she had two kids living with her first sband. But she was eager and not bad. She ver talks of her other life and has never hint-

My father would shred the heads of the ripe barley between his callused hands, and blow away the chaff and bite down on the kernels, chewing like they were something to eat. I would lie on my back, hidden down in the barley, breathing the smell of burning while the stalks rattled in the breezes.

All I could see was the sky. Ruth might have been with me, listening and quiet. That would have been a fine childhood thing, me and Ruth.

Ruth smiles when she looks away to the window where the rain runs in streaks. You have to wonder who she sees in her reflection, and what she sees in me and her.

We live on a big cedar-forest island at the edge of the Japan Current, where it never

strations by Anthony Russo

snows. Everything comes in by boat or floatplane. Ruth and I don't tell each other much of what we came from. Hitting it go at the fact that we are lucky, and here.

The first morning, after we woke up in her bed, she came along to spend the day with me. Before noon we were down in Brownie's, which is a dark old barn built of cedar planking and shakes. No one knows who it was named for. Big smoky windows look out to the street, if you want to look.

All winter while it rains people gather to sit around a barrel stove welded together from sections of culvert, looking at the little isinglass window in the door, where you can see in at the fire. The shadows run up the walls and over our faces.

"We can give them something to talk about," Ruth said that first morning. I should have told her I was proud to walk in with her.

That was October, and I was already done felling timber for another winter. The low clouds hung down into the fog coming off the seawater. That afternoon we sat outside Brownie's under the veranda, on the wood bench where everybody has carved their initials. We had our cans of beer and we were out of the rain as we watched two nuns go along with their tiny steps on the boardwalk. You could see the trouble they had taken to make themselves precious in the world.

"They think it's something," Ruth said.

I'll give myself some credit. Right then I knew this wasn't just some woman from the night before.

The dark red bedsheets are part of Ruth. She changes them every day. She says winter is under water enough without damp sheets.

The rain was flushing through the galvanized gutter above the window. Ruth would be in close beside the oil stove and reading. I could see her, wrapped in one of the Hudson Bay blankets I bought in Victoria. She keeps a pile of magazines on the floor beside the new platform rocker that was supposed to be mine after we moved in together.

Turned out I like to sit at the kitchen table, under the bare bulb. Ruth wanted to put a shade on the bulb, but I said no. There is a big window in the kitchen. I can see out into the canyon through the mirror of my face on the inside of the window and imagine the runs of salmon and the old Tlingit fishermen in their round cedar hats.

My father and my mother were sleeping, and I stood in the doorway and watched them sleep in the square of moonlight from the window. I walked away beside the shadows of the long row of poplar trees that ran between the irrigation ditch and the road from the hou Over on the highway at daybreak, while t sprinklers turned their arcs over the alfalf hooked a ride on the back of a stake-body tru The last thing I saw was the trees along the h irrigation ditch; I can still see them clear as y terday. My father was just like me. But Ruth nothing like my mother. I wonder what a would remember from this place live in Alaska.

The cardboard patches Ruth nailed over knotholes are already turning green. At least didn't buy the house. I was right about th This wasn't the house we wanted. We want build a house of cedar logs.

Ruth always keeps a big jug of orange juice the refrigerator. It burns away the taste of cigarettes. That first night, in one of the cab by the beach, where she was living by hers saying she had come north only for the summ while I was still living in the logging-camp b racks, Ruth said she had grown up learning sleep naked. I can almost taste the feel of h

My boots sat over by the wall, ready and oil for the day when I can go back into the timb You have to wonder what there is to like abo felling those virgin-growth cedar trees, a what kind of man would stay with timber-felli long as I have. The cedars are the most beauti trees in the world.

I work alone, which is dangerous, but I wa silence when I shut down the saw. The re grained back wedge comes falling out, and I sh down my long-bladed Stihl, and I sit there le ting the quiet settle in. The sawdust smells li some proper medicine. Right then I ha enough of everything.

The first-growth trees fall true as angels, wi the whoosh of their needles through the air, a they are dead. Like the natives, I have learn to tell the trees I am sorry, but not so sorry won't cut another in the afternoon. You kill fill your belly, and then you tell them it w necessary. You have to smile at such things.

It is my best life, out in the woods, and th winter there have been times I ache for it as I s through the rainy afternoon in Brownie's a listen to the talk of fish. I wonder if felling tre is true work. But I forget such worries as Rut and I walk downhill through the dripping ear darkness to the movie house, and we are sayi hello to everybody and Ruth is e cited like a girl.

"I walked in the rain," Ruth said. "Aft you went to sleep I walked in the rain." The she said, "You got to tell me what was wro with you," and she ran her cool fingers dow

· long scar on my inner arm.
ach step of it had seemed right at the time. I
i see the pale tender skin along my inner arm
arating as the blade traces toward the wrist,
flesh parting along the length of my wound
a perfect clean way, and the tough white
ath and the deeper seeping meat before it is
drowned in blood.
I am telling you about craziness. I lay in those
ls and I thought I heard my mother's voice
d never slept until I came to believe there was
ne tiny thing wired into my arm, and electri
circuits flashing along with their messages,
ht at the core of my arm like a little machine,
d all of it a trick. Then I could sleep, because
new someone could cut it out with a surgeon's
ıde.
The idea got me in trouble. I found out about
ctors, and I went into the office of the best
ctor in Klamath Falls. I asked him to cut the
ring out of my arm, and the crazy part was
tting on myself when he refused.
It seemed like a good idea to think my trou-
es could be solved by the touch of what they
ll micro cutters. It was the kind of thing you
me to believe like babies believe the things
ey learn before they are born. It was like
ıowing which way is up. But the trouble with
e is over. I sit in our kitchen and read hunting
agazines, and I imagine stalking water birds
ce they were my friends.
I am telling you about craziness, but I
ouldn't tell Ruth. "We all been born with too
much time on our hands." That is
what I said.

We have nights to think about our earliest
emories. In mine there is a red dog resting in
ıe dust beside a stunted little lawn juniper and
ıe crumbling concrete walkway. There is a
ıunderstorm breaking.
That was out front of the apartment building
here we lived when I was a little child in the
ırmhand town of Malin, on the northern
inges of the potato land that drops toward Tule
ake and California. My mother walked me on
ıe sidewalks, in and out of the stores, and to
ıe barbershop, where they smiled when I
limbed up to the board across the arms of the
hair.
That red dog barked in the night, but usually
e was sleeping and wrinkled in the dust. What
see are heavy drops of rain. I can still count
ıem as they puff into the dust. I can close my
yes and call up those raindrops striking each by
ach.
Like my mother would say, "Each thing in its
lace." I can hear her voice clear as my own.
My father had his 200 acres of barley-farming
roperty out south of the Klamath Falls airfield.
He was hiring wimos to herd his low-witted
head of turkeys, and he always had my mother. I
would ride out with him in the gray pickup
truck, gone to check on the well being of his
turkeys, and then home to my mother.
Him and my mother, in those good years after
the war, they called themselves the free world.
But they were playing it like a joke, at parties,
with other men and women.
Men would come to the kitchen while my fa-
ther was gone, and my mother would pour whis-
key. They would sit at the kitchen table with
their whiskey in a tumbler, and my mother
would laugh and stand beside them, and those
men would hug her around the waist and smile
at me while they did it.
"You better go outside," my mother would
tell me, and she would already be untying her
apron.
"We was late with our lives," my father told
me, "me and your mother, so we just stayed
with our playground." He told me there was too
much room for running with your mind when he
was growing up in Tule Lake during the Great
Depression. He said he went crazy during those
years, and that I should be careful if I got my
imagination from him.
My father told me this when I was thirteen,
maybe as a way to explain his lifetime. That was
the first time I left, wishing I could
hear my mother say good-bye.

"If you won't answer me," Ruth said. Then:
"I was only going to tell you what happened."
She was at the stove, tending the eggs and
bacon.
"You were feeling bad," I said, "and you had a
few beers and you walked in the rain and felt
better. Like nobody ever did."
"I drove down to the ocean," Ruth said, "and
walked on the beach. Before daylight." Her
back was to me. She was turning the eggs. "It
was nothing but that and I felt better."
Ruth colors her hair golden, and it had been
running with seawater when she'd come walk-
ing up from the summer ocean. She shook her
head, and I knew her face would taste of salt.
Right there was the first time she reminded me
of my mother. My mother was young, and her
bare arms were red in the summer rain. The
drops stood in her dark hair as she was laugh-
ing in the yellow light under the
thunder.

It was just before the Fourth of July and hot
and clear and still when I came north. The low
fog was banked far out over the ocean. After
some drinking, I would see the gray summer tide
coming cold over the sand and think about the
Lombardy poplar trees you could see for twenty

miles over the fields of alfalfa on the right sunny day around Tule Lake. If you imagined them clear enough, those trees would come closer until their leaves were real, like they could be touched.

Crazy is really a place you could learn to stay. You could learn to live there forever. It was a reason for drinking. I never imagined myself into somewhere else when I was drinking; it was only afterward.

Down in Victoria I bought myself a whole set of Alaska clothes as if that would turn me into an Alaska man, got me a barbershop shave, and rode the Alaska ferry north. It wasn't the right way to travel into such a place, but it was easy and at hand, and it was the season for seeing seabirds and whales and all the fish.

The days were warm and sunlit, and you could smell the evergreen trees over the diesel exhaust as we came to dock in midafternoon. I walked out over the sandy flats to the ocean, a wind was coming off the fog on the horizon, and I found a stone fireplace where fish had been cooked. The sand was littered with red berry boxes, and there were torn newspapers in the brush.

By nightfall I was sitting on the bench outside Brownie's, listening to some men talk about the salmon run and lumbering. The inside of Brownie's looked as hammered out as a cave. I thought of the mills where I'd worked, the howl of saws and wet sawdust, and I wondered if I had come to another wrong place.

Give it a summer, I thought. There was nobody to notify. I had my clothes folded into a canvas duffel bag and a half dozen thousand-dollar bills. My chain saw could earn me $150 on a good day. Only a fool does things without money.

"We ought to be married," Ruth said. She was washing the few breakfast dishes and stacking them on the open-faced shelves above the sink. She went on placing the dishes carefully atop one another, then dried her hands and went to stand before the oil stove. "I could have another baby," she said. "It's not too late. That could be my calling." She smiled like that was going to be funny.

I got up and walked away from her and went into the bedroom. After closing the door, I sat on the bed. *That would be my calling.* I couldn't hear a thing from the other room, not even Ruth moving around. After a while I pulled my worn old black suitcase from under the bed. With the suitcase open, the next move was easy. Ruth could come and stand in the doorway and watch while I packed.

"I'll take a little money to travel on," I would say.

She would look down a moment, and her fa would show no sign of anything, and I wou think it was going to be easy to get out of he with no trouble. "Watch me," I would say. "I' gone."

When the suitcase was packed I would hea past her into the other room, pull on my slick and leather cap, and go out to the shed whe my four-by-four was up on blocks. It would l dry inside, with the rainwater splattering fro the cedar leaves and the dirt like dust mixe with pine needles.

There is a pint of whiskey hidden under th driver's seat. Two long swallows and I wou think about laughing, and sit in the dirt with m back against the wall and whistle *ring-dang-d now what is that.*

My mother beat my ass for that song an washed my mouth in the irrigation ditch. It's song I think about when I want to remember m mother and the way she laughed and hugged m as we sat on the grass with water coming fro her hair in little streams. Now, that is not crazy thoughts of the water streaming through the lit tle redwood weir in that irrigation ditch an my mother knowing some joke I didn' understand.

Ruth came and sat beside me and my blac suitcase on the bed, her elbows on her knee and her head down and her hair hanging fo ward like she was a wrecked woman with noth ing to do but study her hands while some ma made up his mind about her life.

"My mother told me a joke about times lik this," I said.

Ruth didn't answer.

"My mother told me everything you got i like a china cup," I said. "Because it never cam from China, and you always got to worry if it' going to break."

"Some joke," Ruth said, and her face was ar old woman's face when she looked up at me.

Not that she was crying. Her eyes had jus gone old, and the strength in her flesh had los some of its hold on her bones. Her lower lip fel down and showed her teeth, stained by so many cigarettes. I could see the years to come, both o us old in some house where she looked like my mother and the radio was always playing in the other room.

But at the Klamath Falls hospital a nurse unlocked the door and I walked into my moth-er's care, a man thirty-four years old and unable to even trust his own brain.

My mother's hands were cold. What could I tell her? That I had lived too long watching my father turn hermit in the house he built on the corner of his property out by the airfield where the Air Force pilots flew jet planes every hour or

like a clock? Could I tell her jet airplanes will ıke you crazy for answers to everything?

She showed me an old photograph of my fa er: a young man with just the tip of his tongue tween his white teeth, his hands deep in his ckets and the brim of his city-man hat apped down over one eye, like the picture-xing was going to stop everything for all time this moment in his schoolyard. Behind him u can see the painted sign: TURKEYS. "He was e best man they ever had," my mother said. low he's made you crazy."

You could take the same picture of me, deep my forest beside some fallen cedar tree, and u might think, *Who the ll does he think he is?* e've all seen pictures of en who are dead now, ıth their long saws ossed in front of some eat stumpage and their eves rolled up over their bows.



My mother puckered her ft mouth as she eyed me ıd didn't talk anymore, as her tongue had locked ıd she had lost her eech. Then she shook er head. "I'll tell you the ke," she said. "This is ıe joke of it." She looked ound at the house where she was making her and; expensive hardwood furniture and a man-l decorated with halt a hundred engraved ock-show trophies. Silver spires with imita-on silver Angus bulls on the top.

She didn't look like anything was a joke.

"Things changed," she said. "Things will ıange." She was trying to make it sound like a opeful notion. I imagine the first lie, and a me when they came to know there was nobody trust. I imagine them coming to want every oddamn thing they could get their hands on. 's simple. You are going to die, so you better et in on the money and the screwing.

One afternoon she took off in a Lincoln Con-nental with a heavy-built man called Cutty. Cutty had this house left over from the time he as married," she told me. "Your father ouldn't even take me to bed. Cutty knew bet-er, right from the start."

She took off those frameless eyeglasses and leaned them. There was a box of Kleenex on very table in that house. I picked up one of hose trophies with the little silver Angus bulls n top, and I thought, like a child, *So this is the ay to be rich.*

The fall-of-the-year sunlight percolated into ny mother's house through layers of gauzy cur-tains, and she never went outside. Twice a week there was a cleaning lady, and every day there was a boy delivering things. My mother just cooked me meals and waited for me to make my peace.

Maybe it is true about my mother and Cutty, maybe they are still a great love. Over the years Cutty worked himself up from auctioneer to purebred cattle breeder. He was always sending flowers from Bakersfield or some show town.

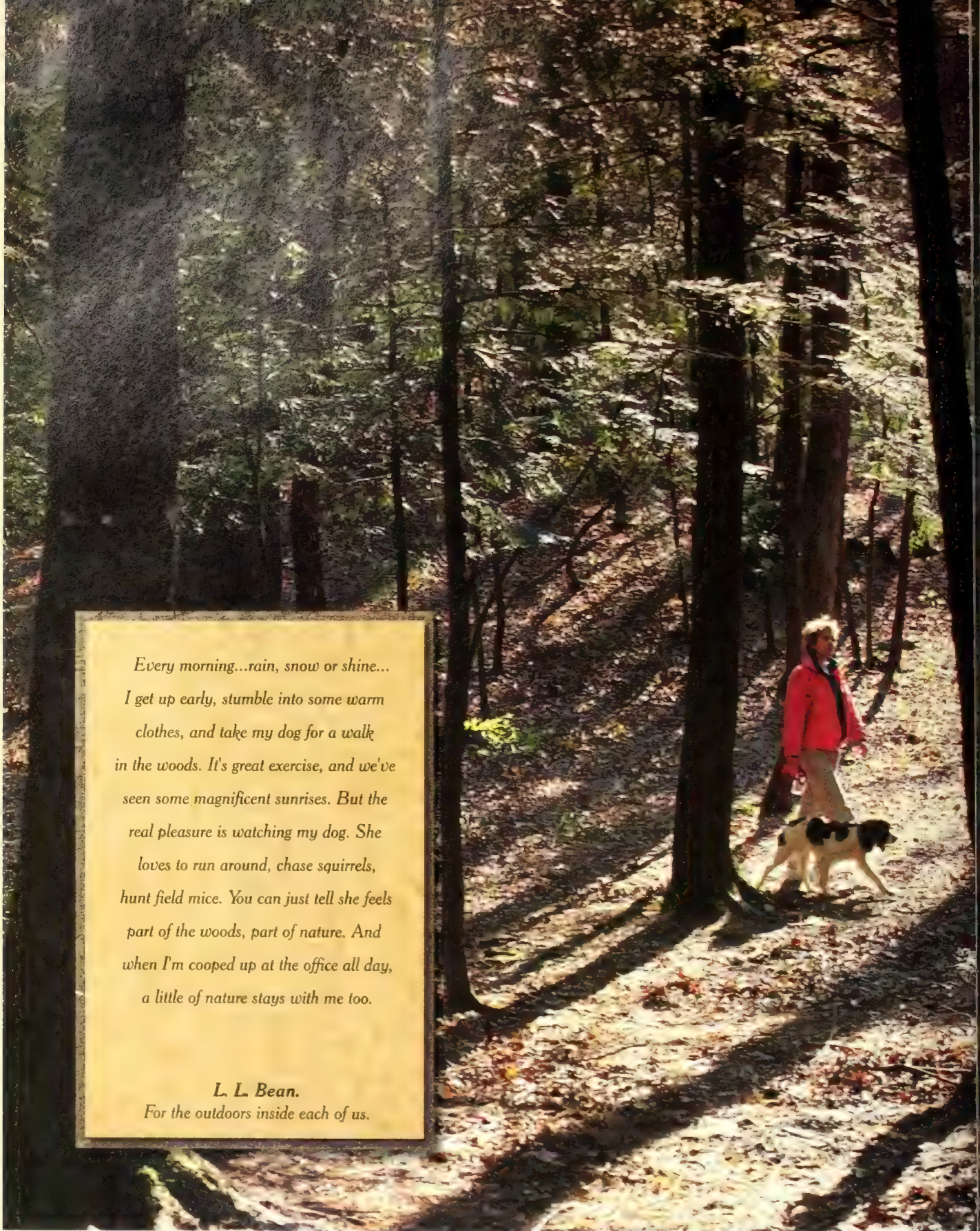
For nine years I worked my summers in the Oregon woods and spent winters with my father in his house. Afternoons in winter I would drive over to the local tavern and shoot some pool, then come home to stir up some tuna and noodles for the microwave oven. Nobody, my father or me, ever really cleaned up the kitchen, and more and more I started to feel tuned to the trembling of those microwaves, all the time closer to discovering I had been wired for other people's ideas.

Just a quarter mile south of my father's house there's a barroom built from a Quonset hut back in World War II, with gas pumps out front. My father was always eager for a walk down to the bar and some drinking and talk first thing in the morning. It's just that you can learn to live in some of those stories. But that is enough about craziness. It's a place you swim like deep in the black ocean with strange fish. You might never want to come up. It's a country where I could go visit and find a home.

Ruth refolded each thing I owned, her hands trembling as she filled my suitcase. The unshaded overhead light was on bright in our bedroom, and she moved like an underwater creature. "Fine," Ruth said. "Just goddamn fine."

Her face was flushed with that fallen look you might imagine as secret to animals, her eyes glazed like stones and this way and that quick as lizards. I remember my mother late in the night when she was drunk in our kitchen, where the windows were thick with ice. I would come awake from hearing her laugh and ease from the bedroom, where the people's coats were piled on the other bed, and she wouldn't even see me with those eyes.

"Just fucking wonderful," Ruth said. "You



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ful son of a bitch." I didn't know if she
int me or herself.
Ruth unfolded my stiff canvas Carhartt
ber-felling pants with the red suspenders,
cuffs jagged and the knees slick with pitch,
she stepped into them and pulled them up
hooked the suspenders over her shoulders,
dress wadded up inside, and she stood there
a circus girl. "How do you think?" she said.
u think I could work in the woods?"
You ought to have a baby," she said then.
u ought to lie down on your back and come
t apart and smell your own blood in the
room. But you never can. What can
you do?"

This is what I could do. I could lace my
ots. I could get the blocks out from under my
evy and spend the afternoon cleaning the
gs until she idled like your perfect sewing ma-
ne. It would be twilight and the white Alas-
n ferryboat would be rolling in the long
an troughs as I stood at the rail with a pint of
iskey in my hand and watched the cedar-tree
untains turn to night under the snowy moun-
ns beyond to the east. I could go anywhere in
nerica.
But Ruth was smiling, and it wasn't her
:etheart smile. "You better get me," she said,
d she dropped those suspenders and stepped
t of my canvas Carhartt pants.
"You know what I can do?" she said. "I am
ng to lie down and come unseamed for a
w."
You wonder what the difference is between
and women, and if women really like to
nk there is some hidden thing inside them
at is growing and will one day be someone
e, some hidden thing telling them what to
. There was Ruth at thirty-nine years old,
th her babies behind her, too old for what she
d she wanted, standing there with her hands
en and willing to look at the possibility of dy-
g for some baby.
You think of the old explorers. You have to
ow there was a time when they smelled their
nd from out to sea and the clouds blew away,
d it came to them that this coastline they had
und was a seashore where nobody exactly like
em was ever given a chance to walk before.
"I'm going to say, 'Baby,'" Ruth said, "'do
u hear your mother talking? Baby, are you
tening?'"
Me and Ruth were there in the glare off the
ass. I could see us, and I had to wonder what
r children would see if they were watching
d looking for hints about who they should
me to be. Ruth looked mottled white like the
od was gone out of her. "Either that," she
id, "or you can get the hell out of here."

Those old explorers must have smiled their
mountains, trying to think this was what they
had always wanted, this place they didn't know
about. You try to control the shaking of your
hands, and you want to say, All right, this will
be all right, this is what I'll take, I'll stay here.

"We'll split some shakes," I said. Tearing
around the room, picking up my stuff and stor-
ing it back into where it belonged, refolding
those stiff canvas Carhartt pants along the
seams, carefully as they could be folded, I felt
like a child on a slippery floor, and Ruth eyed
my moves like all of a sudden she wasn't quite
sure what she wanted after all. Ruth could see I
wasn't going anywhere, and the rest was up to
her. There was no one thing to say, and I still
cannot name the good fortune I saw except as
things to do.

"You coming with me?" I said. In this country
they roof their houses with shakes split from
pure cedar. We went out that afternoon and
bought a straight-grain cedar-tree log and had
it hauled to us. Ruth wouldn't hardly look at
me or say anything, but she went
along.

That night Ruth slept in her chair with her
magazines. By late the next day we had built a
canopy of clear plastic to keep our work dry from
the rain, and we started splitting the shakes,
side by side. We will build a house where our
things to do can be thick with time on our
hands.

People will watch us build, and we will be the
ones who know the secret. We'll watch strang-
ers on the sand flats. We'll know they envy us
our house built of cedar logs. We will live with
one garden that grows nothing but red and yel-
low flowers, and we'll have another garden with
cabbages. Our dogs and our cats will sleep on
the beds, and me and Ruth will carve faces into
the cedar-log walls, and those faces will smile
back at us in our dreams and be our friends and
warn us of trouble, looking back at us like we
were the world, and watching what we do like
we watch the seabirds picking on the rocks at
low tide.

There will be cabins with covered walkways
to the house. My father could live in one, and
my mother could come visit, and Ruth and I
and my father and mother could all go down to
the movie house and over to Brownie's after the
show.

Your mind is sometimes full of little animals
and you have to trick them with things to see.
We will live in our house like the old people
lived in their houses. Maybe we will come to
know what it is like to lie awake in the night
while our children listen for our talking and
laughing as we listen for theirs. ■

A FEW PEOPLE'S POWER

The Philippines' stalled revolution

By Susan Blaustein

Complaints about Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, the president of the Philippines, were the entrée at a Manila Polo Club luncheon not long ago. The Polo Club rests like a gracious colonial mansion on a hill at the end of a lovely, well-guarded drive within the exclusive confines of Forbes Park—Manila's answer to Beverly Hills—and it proved a comfortable setting for a select group of former Aquino supporters to sit and dine and trade tales of her incompetence.

Liveried servants lined the dark, paneled halls, where one encounters yellowing photos of past Polo Club presidents, most of them Americans. The club was built in 1909 by the American governor general of the Philippines, polo enthusiast William Cameron Forbes, as a place to keep his game in shape. What Governor Forbes described as "the most absolutely perfect polo field in the world . . . with swimming pools, clubhouses, stables . . ." has since expanded to a sixty-acre, incorporated country club with more than 2,000 shareholders—including various members of Aquino's family—who own stock now valued at about $30,000 a share.

One of my hosts, a Manila investment analyst whom I will call Tito Ablan, escorted me to the club in his baby-green Mercedes-Benz, then ushered me into an air-conditioned sunroom. Comfortably ensconced at a table overlooking the club's polo fields and swimming pool were five wealthy and respected men, all casually well-heeled, who had already begun their ritualized litany of grievances against Aquino and her advisers.

While smoked mackerel was painstakingly served by more waiters than necessary, the gentlemen (who, because they are prominent in Manila, spoke to me on the condition that they remain nameless) held forth on Aquino's impotence. This was manifested, they joked, in last summer's crippling, four-month-long electrical power shortage but was evident too in her inability to get the economy rolling, traffic flowing, or garbage picked up; to do something about Manila's 3.8 million squatters; or to protect and develop the coastline and countryside so that hordes of rural poor—now deprived of their traditional means of livelihood thanks to unchecked illegal logging, open-pit mining, dynamite and cyanide fishing, and the absence of adequate farm-to-market roads—would not be forced to the cities to find work.

Such was the first course of the meal, and, inspired perhaps by the succulent roast prime rib that followed, the businessmen's spleen grew. Cory, they lamented, was clearly unable to quash her opponents' rambunctious propensity to stage coups. Worse, she refused to crack down on the rampant graft practiced by members of her cabinet and family—"th new cronies." Not only had she faile to recoup the millions stolen by fo mer president Ferdinand E. Marc and *his* cronies, the Polo Club gen groused, but after five years in pow and seven coup attempts her deputie had been unable to make any charge stick against either the Marcos cro nies or the coup plotters, or to kee many of those rebels they *had* man aged to jail from escaping. The strik ing absence of leadership within th presidential palace had only aggravat ed the government's paralysis, fur thered a contagious opportunism, an made way for a season of anarchy.

Last June and July a spate of unex plained bombings, armed robberies death threats against prominen businessmen by right- and left-win extremists, gruesome murders, an street-side shootouts between variou combinations of police, drug dealers the military, and communist insur gents raised the pitch of public anxi ety—which was already heightened by almost daily coup rumors from var ious factions within the armed forces and by the targeting of American ci vilians and foreign-aid workers by armed insurgents. Then, from mid-August to November neither the po lice nor the military was able to control or explain an epidemic of dai ly bomb explosions in Manila. Nor could they prevent an October muti ny staged by military rebels on the southernmost island of Mindanao.

Susan Blaustein has written about the Philippines for The New Yorker *and other publications. She lives in Manila.*

The chaotic climate has been in-
sified further still by the persistent
ıteurism with which Aquino's ad-
ıistrative team has handled a slew
nforeseen calamities. The govern-
ıt's confused and inadequate re-
nse to a catastrophic earthquake
July resulted in the additional loss
everal hundred lives. Last fall's re-
rnation from Kuwait and Iraq of
ıe 65,000 Filipino maids and con-
ıction workers has also been slug-
ı, bungling, and subject to
whim of self-interested offi-
ıs. The Persian Gulf crisis
cost the Philippines econ-
y millions of sorely needed
lars usually sent home by
ese workers (even as my
ıwedly patriotic hosts at the
o Club continue to stash
alth abroad). The surge in
employment resulting from
workers' return, coupled with
December's suddenly dou-
d gas prices, has had an
endiary political impact in
ınila, where inflation is al-
dy high, wages are low, and
e third of the population lives in
ınties and is underemployed.

As the prime rib was cleared
ay, the portly fellow at the
ad of the table, whom I'll call
ılando "Roly" Ventador,
ıcked his tongue, though he
d absorbed our chatter so far
th no more than an occasional
:hed eyebrow. "It hurts," Ventador
said, "to see someone of my
own class fumble so badly."

ive difficult years through her
-year term in office, President
quino has let many of her people
wn, and it is not only the Polo Club
h who feel betrayed. Her consistent
lure to implement social reform in
is underdeveloped, largely agrarian
tion has daunted the hope that
illions of Filipinos held in Feb-
ary 1986, when their bloodless
eople power" revolution toppled
e twenty-year, corrupt Marcos dic-
torship and installed Aquino as
esident. However well-meaning,
e simply has been unable to over-
me her oligarchic origins and family
terests to effect even a modest redis-
bution of wealth in a land where a
tiny, powerful elite has traditionally
lorded it over the vast majority of im-
poverished Filipinos.

"She has shown our class to be irre-
sponsible, petty, inept," Ventador
continued at our luncheon, brusquely
summoning a waiter for more iced tea.
"There are really only two options: Ei-
ther someone from that same class
comes up to redeem us, or it's time for
somebody else to come up and say,
'You guys don't have it anymore.'"



That "somebody else" would clearly
be less than favorably disposed toward
the ruling classes.

The talk turned to emigration. A
kindly, baby-faced management con-
sultant, whom I'll call Sonny dela
Rosa, recommended Portugal, where
the authorities had not yet clamped
down on visas for Filipinos because of
a surfeit of unwelcome "guest" work-
ers. Come 1992 one can relocate any-
where in Europe, Dela Rosa added,
sipping a diet Coke. Ventador bright-
ened at the turn in the conversation,
then excitedly mentioned the passage
last fall of a long-awaited United
States immigration law that could en-
title as many as 50,000 Filipino World
War II veterans and their families to
U.S. citizenship. Ventador's enthusi-
asm was not surprising. The instinct
to flee to America is almost a national
trait here. And the evidence, often
cited, that most Filipinos love their
former colonizers more than they hate
them is that the people demonstrating
at Manila's U.S. Embassy against the
continued presence of the U.S. mili-
tary bases here are usually outnum-
bered by those lined up at the consular
section hoping for nonimmigrant visas.

I glanced toward the pool, where a
dark, uniformed Filipina attendant
was smoothing suntan oil on the back
of a lithe mestiza beauty. It was evi-
dent that those with the means to
genuinely help this country were too
busy plotting quick getaways while
marking time in luxury cocoons and
enjoying the diversions of leisure.

"Have you been to a polo match?"
asked a corporate lawyer whom I'll
call Dani Olivares, breaking my rev-
erie. "You know, it's the season now.
They play just here, on this field."
Olivares indicated the emerald lawn
below, which I later learned is regu-
larly trod by the 170 horses privately
stabled at the club.

I was reminded of Camelot Stables,
on the grounds of Hacienda Luisita,
the Cojuangcos' 17,000-acre sugar
plantation two hours north of Manila
in Tarlac Province, where Aquino's
brother, Congressman Jose "Peping"
Cojuangco Jr., accommodates prize
equines in equal splendor. On my last
sojourn there, two glowing stallions

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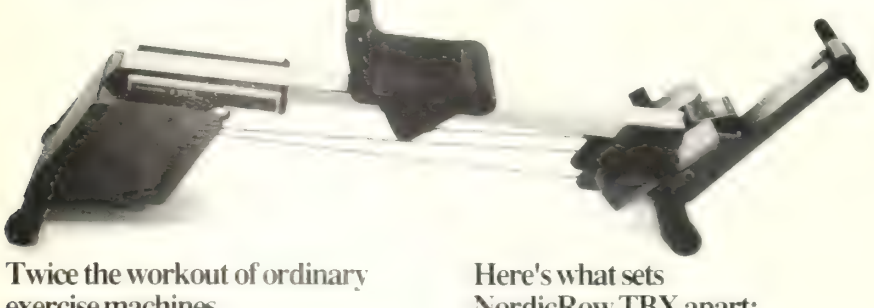
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named Lauria and Derby had b
doing their best to keep some thi
five mares impregnated with incipi
champion racehorses.

"Willya looka that Lauria. He
six eggs a day, just to make lo
Franky Donesa Jr., chief security c
cer for the hacienda's 180-man for
had said to me, excitedly. "That's
money." He had then pointed t
small pony nuzzling its mother i
stable more substantial than the
ing quarters of Luisita's 7,000 fa
workers. "My big boss can't j
accept any old mare to breed with t
Lauria," Donesa had boasted. "S
gotta be top, top, top."

Congressman Cojuangco a
breeds fighting cocks, which he sh
ters in 1,000 knee-high wooden
pees just across the driveway from
family's five-home compound and
own personal cockpit. Over an am
feast on the terrace of the Luisita G
and Country Club, Donesa and pla
tation manager Ner Mendoza, w
looks after the congressman's bir
had explained to me the essenti
of breeding prize cocks a
thoroughbreds.

"The most important thing is t
bloodline," Mendoza had said, "t
gameness. Game birds are expected
fight to the death. They die for yo
money. If they don't, you kill the
Gameness is important for horses to
That's why you really have to look
the line."

Congressman Cojuangco himse
had told me that "if you produce
champion line, it's an accomplis
ment. You know, cockfighting is t
national sport. It's like a fraternity.

Like Filipino politics, clearly. In
their talk of "the line," Mendoz
Donesa, and their "big boss, the co
gressman," had seemed to be saying
much about Philippine society
about the breeding and care of coc
and horses.

When I asked my luncheon co
panions at the Polo Club about Filip
no dynasties, they took pains
explain that the Cojuangco fami
alone currently qualifies as a "maj
league" political, economic, and s
cial elite. In a culture still largely fe
dal, owning Hacienda Luisita ear
the family this distinction. Now th
the Cojuangco clan was back in po

it was explained, Cory was not ut to jettison her family's feudal antage by implementing *real* rian reform in her own back l—at least not if her relatives had anything to say about it.

No one around me at the club ned overly concerned about land rm, however. They *were* worried ut their investments and seemed njoy the mental exercise of mea ng the current government's sta ty against imagined alternatives. y had invited a senior military of il, whom I'll call General Cesar z, to brief them after lunch on the rent mood of the military's young, less, and supposedly idealistic offi s. When I asked whether prospec e financiers might not have itical agendas different from each er's and from the military plotters' y might back, the officer agreed.

A coup would be a tactical alli e," Ruiz said. "Then the allies ıld fight among themselves."

General Ruiz and the gentlemen n discussed alternative scripts for bloodless," or "constitutional," ıp, most of which featured ınto's loyal defense secretary, Fi Ramos, as the anointed figure ırged with reuniting the divided itary and informing Aquino that time was up. I must have let es e a neophyte's shudder, for my t, Tito Ablan, took me aside to ex in the facts of life.

"Politics in the Philippines," Ab said, "is like shadow play: You can l it bribery, courting alliances, ving insurance, protection money here, it's like helping a family."

Ablan, like most Manila business n, dreads the prospect of a violent cure of power —from the right or left—that would disrupt the busi ss community's ability to make ney. But the businessmen's fears n't stop them from hedging their s by supporting, if called upon, one more rebel factions. The idea, sim , is to end up on the winning side.

"I think we can find a peaceful way resolving this crisis," Ablan con ued, scheming aloud. "I don't be ve Cory would be as difficult as ırcos—as long as she is forced to ac cept it. You gotta make it *appear* that she's strong, that she's won. You've put a gun to her head, but you don't pull the trigger." He paused for effect. "That's where the backroom maneuvering comes in—before the shooting starts. Because it's to everyone's interest that there is no major upheaval here. Once there's an explosion, God knows how the pieces will disintegrate."

Given the many players working from competing scenarios, Ablan was only being realistic in his anxious surmise that a violent upheaval could steal the whole show from him and his wealthy accomplices. For instance, the short-lived October rebellion in Mindanao was triggered not by Manila-based private-sector financing but by a concatenation of aggrieved military factions and a local secessionist movement that mistakenly assumed that the dissatisfied citizenry of the neglected, insurgency-riddled region would support an uprising. But the Filipino people—Catholic, forgiving, cautious, easily distracted—are slow to rouse. Luckily for Aquino, they responded, as during previous attempted coups, not with rage or a sense of entitlement but with curiosity, then apathy.

The righteous expression of grievances comes more naturally to the rebel officers, and many of these complaints sound remarkably like those of Aquino's other nemesis, the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed faction, the New People's Army. Like their revolutionary leftist counterparts, the so-called idealists in the armed forces complain, with considerable legitimacy, of widespread corruption among military and civilian officials, a lack of political will to implement development projects that will correct the extreme social inequity, and a debilitating colonial mentality toward the United States. But however articulate the rebel soldiers may be about the failings of the current administration, they have yet to offer a coherent picture of what they would do if they came to power.

I spoke with President Aquino herself about military coups and her other problems in an interview at the

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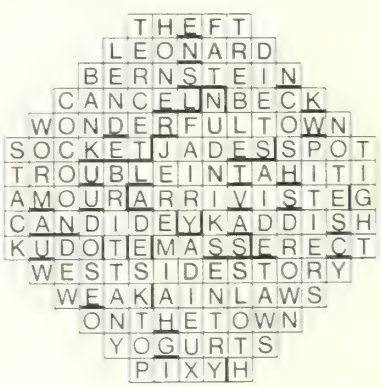
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presidential palace. We first discuss[ed] her own family's solution to land r[e]form—by which farmers on Hacien[da] Luisita will be given shares of stock [in] the family-controlled Hacienda Lu[i]sita corporation over a thirty-ye[ar] period. Aquino assured me the stock transfer plan has the farmers' ov[er]whelming support. "Aside from the[ir] salaries, they get profits from the co[r]poration, they get their home lots f[or] free, and they continue to have [all] their benefits," the president mai[n]tained.

Neatly seated within her gracio[us] chandeliered quarters, surrounded [by] waist-high Chinese porcelain an[d] crystal butterflies, Aquino seeme[d] unconcerned by the possibility th[at] distributing stock instead of la[nd] would only prolong the feudal syste[m] and forestall the broadly based prope[r]ty ownership that is usually co[n]sidered a cornerstone of a liber[al] democracy.

"The only reason the farmworke[rs] went for this stock option is that th[ey] don't want to lose those benefits," Luisita manager Mendoza had co[n]fided to me during my visit there. Among the cradle-to-grave benefi[ts] enjoyed by Luisita workers are fr[ee] hospital and burial services and worki[ng] conditions superior to those o[f] other haciendas. He had explained that, to these farmers, "land reform" meant the hardship they had seen be[fall] their neighbors when, in the earl[y] 1950s, rice lands were simply dole[d] out to peasants without such neces[sa]ry support services as low-interes[t] loans, drying and milling facilities, adequate irrigation, and advice o[n] planting and marketing.

Early in her term, Aquino declared her agrarian reform program to b[e] "the centerpiece" of her administra[t]ion. By June 1988, when a land reform law had finally slogge[d] through the Congress, it was itself s[o] riddled with loopholes that, even if fully implemented, it could not hav[e] altered significantly the inequitabl[e] patterns of land ownership here. Moreover, since the law's ratifica[t]ion, Aquino's Department of Agra[r]ian Reform (DAR) has, by all accounts, been run inefficiently. Unable, through incompetence or worse, t[o] spend monies allotted for land reform

DAR's 1991 budget was slashed by
billion pesos—$143 million. (In
years the DAR has had five direc-
: One quit over a land scam within
department, and two were denied
gressional confirmation, large-
ecause they threatened to actually
lement the law.)
As for her critics' endless carping
talk of coups, Aquino seemed
ized.
I guess, as president, I should not
w these things to bother me," she
l me, smiling. "I am a woman, I am
in this business, and I am the
ler of a developing country. So
at I say is, Charge it to the exigen-
of political office."
Despite this heartening show of
ck, for the better part of our meet-
the president seemed beleaguered,
l her upbeat, resilient demeanor
nowhere in sight. The woman
se courage and grace in 1986 had
tivated the nation and much of
world now appeared girded for
tle, quick to take offense, and
nensely vulnerable beneath her
itly pursed exterior.
"I agree that there have been few
nges," she said when I asked about
sluggish implementation of criti-
reforms. "I realize so much more
to be done, and we are trying to do
re, with our limited resources."
President Aquino still claims the
toration of democracy to the Phil-
ines as her crowning political
ievement. But many Filipinos
w insist that what has been "re-
red" to political power is no more
an that part of the elite that had
en shut out and robbed blind by
arcos. Aquino's newly restored
mocratic space in this nation of
re than 64 million quickly shrank
a space about the size of a sandbox
enough only for several hundred
garchs to play in, sling mud at their
emies, and build castles for their
nilies and friends out of the nation's
ils.
After four years of economic pro-
ams that have clearly revealed her
visers' bias toward big business,
dustry, and, on issues of debt servic-
, foreign commercial banks, Presi-
nt Aquino recently tried to launch
series of initiatives and economic

Continued on page 78

You deserve a factual look at...

The U.N. and the Middle East

Is it a proper forum to sit in judgment

From following what's happening in the United Nations it's easy to come to the conclusion that Israel is the source of most of the problems in the world. And that, if Israel were only less "intransigent" and if it would yield the administered territories of the "West Bank" and Gaza, peace would descend on the Middle East.

What are the facts?

■ The United Nations seems obsessed with Israel. The level of U.N. preoccupation with Israel is totally out of proportion with events in that country. In the course of the last ten years, the General Assembly has entertained 175 hostile resolutions dealing with Israel and the "Palestinian problem". During that entire year it did not once criticize any of the Arab countries. Every year, the General Assembly goes through the charade of considering the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations. In 1985, the General Assembly of the U.N. covered itself with everlasting shame by declaring that Zionism is racism. The Security Council has proposed numerous anti-Israel resolutions during the last three years. All of them would have passed unanimously or with lopsided majorities had it not been for vetoes of most of them by the United States.

■ Recently, the attention of the United Nations was particularly engaged by two incidents in Israel, namely the killing of seven Arab laborers by a demented Israeli solitary gunmen, and by the death of 17 Arab on the Jerusalem Temple Mount. In that incident, a mob of 4,000 Arabs, thrown into a frenzy by their clerics, loosed fusillades of rocks and other missiles on Jewish worshippers gathered for prayers by the Western Wall. In both cases, the Security Council dropped all other business, promulgated anti-Israel resolutions and requested that teams of "observers" be sent to Israel, presumably to report on the alleged abuses perpetrated on the "Palestinians" by that country and by its government. One wonders why, regardless of the merits of the anti-Israel accusations, any "observers" at all would be required. Israel, and the territories administrated by it, are not some remote region in some outlying area of a dark empire. There are more journalists, photographers, television crews, reporters, parliamentary delegations, professional groups, fact finding missions, and human rights activists there than in any other spot on the globe. Never in modern history has there been a spot so microscopically and so meticulously inspected as the small country of Israel. One questions why a delegation of U.N. observers would be required and what mischievous purposes their observations could possibly serve.

■ The obsession of the United Nations with Israel and its alleged violations is the more remarkable considering that organizations's total disregard of the unspeakable barbarities of so many other nations in the Middle East. For instance, the Security Council meeting that resolved to send a delegation to Israel to investigate "abuses" was inspired by the PLO, whose numberless outrages -- including the killing of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, the bombing of tourist buses, old-age homes, synagogues, airports, airliners, and so much more -- have never received the slightest attention by the U.N. Nor have the unspeakable human rights abuses and sickening crimes by the Arab states ever been discussed in that body. These crimes, instigated and supported by Arab governments, include the slaughter in 1982 of over 20,000 Syrian citizens in Hama, at the command of Hafez Assad, that country's president (and our most recent ally!); the poison-gassing of over 5,000 Iraqi Kurdish citizens by Saddam Hussein; over 100,000 Lebanese civilians killed by PLO gunmen, and other militias and terrorist groups; Egyptian troops cold-bloodedly killing over 100 rioting police in 1986; the Algerian police indiscriminatingly machine-gunning hundreds of its own citizens in a few days of rioting; the Libyans assassinating untold numbers of their opponents inside the country and outside; hundreds of Iranian pilgrims ruthlessly being gunned down by the Saudis during the pilgrimage to Mecca; the hundreds of thousands being killed in the Sudan in inter-racial massacres, Lebanon's rape by Syria, and so much more. The United Nations did not concern itself with any of these.

Among the hypocritical accusers of Israel in the U.N. Security Council are the French and the Soviets, merchants of death who have supplied Iraq with the weaponry, the materials and the technology to produce chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Without them, the present situation would not have arisen. These same cynics bitterly denounced Israel for destroying the Iraqi nuclear capability in 1981. Had Israel not done that, Iran would now in all likelihood be an atomic wasteland and no U.S. or U.N. presence in the area would now be possible. And such stalwarts democrats and practitioners of human rights as Yemen, Cuba, Zaire, and Malaysia also sit on the Security Council and cynically condemn Israel, the only people in the entire Middle East that have a freely elected government and that contributed to the Western legacy the very concepts of justice and of human rights. Is the U.N. a proper forum to sit in judgment about Israel and about the events in the middle East? The evidence is clear and the answer is obvious.

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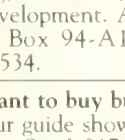
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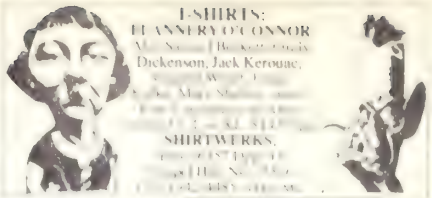


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MISCELLANEOUS

Acrosticians Club. Free [illegible] details, puzzles. Mock, 1030-A Delaware, Berkeley, Calif. 94710.

[illegible] reforms in line with her administration's newly declared "preferential option for the poor," for whom she admitted to me, "very little has changed."

"I would like to do more than just reduce the level of poverty," Aquino asserted. "The remaining years of my term will be dedicated to improving the quality of life for the bottom 30 percent, instead of just waiting for the trickle-down effect."

Not much has trickled down thus far. Although Aquino often boasts of having reduced the numbers of those living below the poverty threshold, the national income distribution remains as top-heavy as before, and since 1985 the standard of living among the poorest families has actually worsened.

Aquino's renewed vow to help the poor would have been welcome news to the dignified guard who escorted me beneath an umbrella back across the palace grounds after my interview. President Aquino was good, he volunteered quietly, his voice almost lost in the torrential downpour, but his job was not. As he deposited me at the curb outside the palace gate, he gently asked me for some money.

I trudged through the flooded streets in search of a cab, past run-down wooden homes with windows covered by rusty metal sheeting. To live in Manila now is to experience the daily debilitating effects of great, convergent forces: population growth, the destruction of natural resources, and official disregard for ordinary people. Several blocks from the palace, at the corner of North Padilla Street, an old man squatted on a pile of rubble, a rag over his head to keep off the drenching rain.

After the luncheon we pulled away in the Mercedes from the club's marble entrance, and, through the tinted windshield, I saw a dozen men and women club members dressed in whites. They stood on the sparkling green archery field, frozen for a moment with bows drawn. Their attendants, also in white, held bright umbrellas to keep the sun off. It was a frozen frame of Impressionist color and languor.

The car then passed six stoo[illegible] gardeners clipping grass at the edg[illegible] the curb and four workmen pain[illegible] white numbers on the reserved p[illegible] ing spots. A uniformed guard salu[illegible] as we eased through the main gat[illegible] wondered how much longer these borers would wait to enjoy the effect of Aquino's trickle-down mocracy. And I wondered what anything, they stood to gain if an the "bloodless" coup scenarios so gently choreographed by my w[illegible] fried Polo Club hosts were ever succeed, or if such scenarios would tact, be bloodless.

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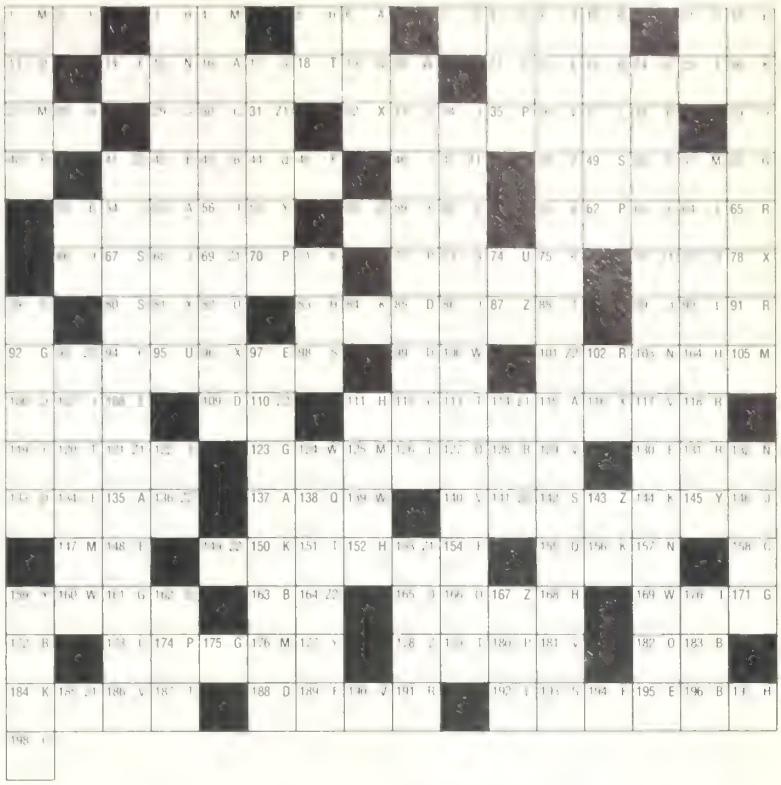
1,2 Moody's Investors Service (N.Y.C.); **3,4** *Forbes* (N.Y.C.)/U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; **5** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; **6** Federal Reserve (Washington); **7,8** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; **9** Debra Rosenberg, *Newsweek* (Boston); **10,11** Orange County Coroners Office (Santa Ana, Calif.); **12** California State Assembly (Sacramento, Calif.); **13** National Hockey League (Montreal); Roger W. Libby, National Organization of Sexual Enthusiasts (Atlanta); **15** Alan Guttmacher Institute (N.Y.C.); **16** Custom Condoms (Somerville, Mass.); New York State Commission of Correction (Albany); **18** Correctional Association of New York (N.Y.C.); **19** Institute of Politics, Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass.); **20** *Krasnaya Zvezda* newspaper (Moscow); **21** United Nations Office of Demographics (N.Y.C.)/Center for Defense Information (Washington); **22,23** Video Monitoring Services of America (N.Y.C.)/*Harper's* research; U.S. Department of Defense; **25** Center for Defense Information (Washington); **26** Harold G. Maier, Vanderbilt University (Nashville); **27** *Harper's* research; Joel Goodman, The Humor Project (Saratoga Springs, N.Y.); **29,30** Plaskool (Pawtucket, R.I.); **31** *Des Moines Register* Iowa poll; **32** Baseline (N.Y.C.); **33** Dennis, Davis & Associates (N.Y.C.); **34,35** Maidenform (N.Y.C.); **36** American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (Park Ridge, Ill.); **37** Frank Spotnitz, *Spy* magazine (N.Y.C.); **38** Korbel Champagne Cellars (Guerneville, Calif.)/R. H. Bruskin Associates (New Brunswick, N.J.); **39** Swank Publishing (Placentia, Calif.); **40** Hallmark Cards (Kansas City).

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 98

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 74.



CLUES

A. Acknowledges, yields before (2 wds.) 113 53 137 16 158 6

B. Italian hors d'oeuvre 53 128 58 196 172 43 38 165 183

C. Cargo ships 173 112 158 11 30 7 198

D. Right, claim 133 165 109 50 99 188 162 85 13 21 39

E. N suburb of London, Eng., part of Greater London 108 42 2 148 60 97 12 195 130

F. Misleads, rids oneself of (2 wds.) 45 59 154 63 119 134 189 194 14

G. Calcareous prominence used to break through the shell by an oviparous creature in hatching (2 wds.) 73 92 123 161 171 175 52 77

H. Edible roots of a plant of the mustard family 197 53 104 3 111 152 168 5

I. "'E's a devil an' a man an' a orphan-child in one" (Kipling, "Oonts") 56 107 66 170 46 9 122

J. Train, retinue; series of related things 89 56 34 146 68

K. Seaport, S Spain, on the Mediterranean, large, oval grape 184 26 84 150 144 156

L. Arid inland part of Australia 22 126 90 54 192 37 64

M. First great ballet star to dance "Les Sylphides" 125 1 105 147 31 4 176 27

N. Tristan Tzara's artistic cult 132 103 157 15

O. Word M's state of birth 33 106 82 182 127 166

P. Caught up with 174 70 94 72 35 62 40 180

Q. Bunk, nonsense 155 19 44 138

R. Cosmetic preparation (2 wds.) 102 118 191 65 10 91 75 131 23

S. At once (2 wds.) 49 80 98 67 79 142 193 29

T. Fear; lack of self-confidence 151 18 113 179 25 120 88 187

U. Reckless, impetuous; bold, impudent 61 95 74 28 17

V. Obvious, plain 129 190 36 117 181 186 140

W. Knotty 20 139 169 135 163 124

X. Animal of Mexico and S America, similar to the raccoon but with a long, flexible snout 32 116 78 81 96

Y. Preliminary rounds, as of a race 145 71 99 27 177

Z. Swellings, protuberances, as on a body 178 143 167 45 57

Z1. Supplication 114 47 121 31 153 183 76 69

Z2. Bridge hand containing no card above a nine 130 24 151 41 194 149 112 8 93 141

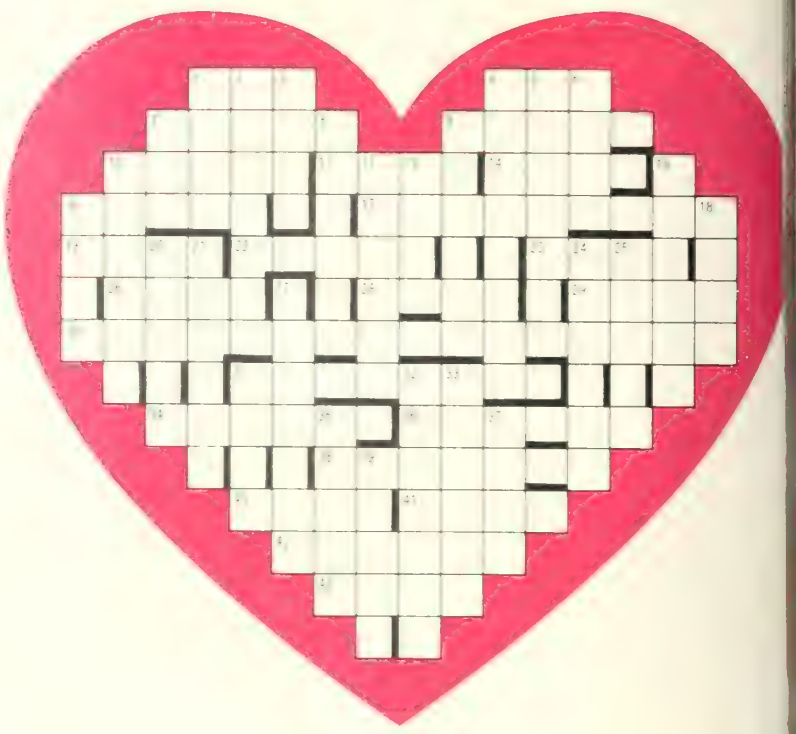
PUZZLE

Valentine

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.

Many of the clue answers are too short to fit in the diagram, so the solver should observe the valentine's homily (30 Across). All "lights" (diagram entries) are words.

Clue answers include four proper names, a common foreign word, and two uncommon words (11A, 12D); lights include uncommon words at 31A, 40A, and 24D, and several abbreviations. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 74.



Across

1. Black and blue and kind of shot (2)
4. Crummy-sounding modern music maker? (2)
7. Ladies' underwear not quite lacking restraint (4)
9. French—ay, that's the rub (4)
10. She had contracts to take clothes off (4)
11. Somewhat fascinating spore cases (4)
14. Associate one with unfinished conception (4)
16. What colliding produces in rear end! (4)
17. Old clothes from lacemakers? (7)
19. Place to undergo analysis topless? That hurts! (4)
22. Palest among brews? Could be . . . could be the opposite! (4)
23. Liver or bacon — take heads, it's a toss-up (3)
26. Consorted with Hindu queen—not I (3)
28. Zeus's mother is Egyptian god, he assumed (4)
29. Breakfast's beginning with light sandwich (3)
30. See instructions (16, *five words*)
31. One-hundred-and-fifty-degree (at the end) taper (6)
34. Prayer for evil doing — priest skirts subject partially (5)
36. Company revised shot for emcee's partner (6)
38. Kind of rock that could make [illegible] (5)
40. Oddly formal religious title (3)
41. VIP shows how some big numbers end up (4)
42. Snowy traveler has this to get unmoved (4)
43. Use ends of wood split shingles (shakes) (3)

Down

1. British gentleman raised to be good to the French (3)
2. Shakespearean role for woman requiring unusual range (5)
3. Doctor abed, as directed (4)
4. Long Island storm almost lifted up marsh plant (7)
5. Somewhat weariless badgers (5)
6. Most of an irrational art movement is relative (3)
8. Art gallery sale with 25 percent off planned (5)
9. Government agent captures subject—true, it's rigged (6)
10. Churlish, and certainly losing energy (5)
12. Amount of timber that can be got from trees (5)
13. Cabbage and catfish (gutted) (4)
15. $1,000 range for some trees (5)
16. This contributes to inherited nature! (3)
18. Place to brood over error (4)
20. Like country life? After a couple of letters, it becomes a pain in the gut (5)
21. How Amy rebuilt part of the barn (6)
24. Book ultimate party (5)
25. Wink when including Latin in sheepish talk? (4)
27. Some measures general studies following question (6)
31. Belt is part of a pair of pants (4)
32. Papist lecture covers backsliding Irishmen (5)
33. End of bond rise unfortunately eliminates liquidity (5)
35. Fish, to wit, with fishing pole (5)
37. Something for Mason's performance is hard to clean up (3)
39. Seventeenth-century painter of Prince Henry (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Valentine," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the April issue. Winners of the December 1990 puzzle, "Wampum," are Wallace F. Krupenevich, Newington, Connecticut; Jinny Jones, Bethesda, Maryland; and Billy Deyo, New York, New York.

March

J. K. Galbraith: Owning Up to the Recession

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Puzzle 80 *E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.*

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LETTERS

Teaching Children in the Home

High school English teacher David Guterson may have accurately portrayed many of the shortcomings of the current American school system ["When Schools Fail Children," November 1990] in his argument that schools are little more than a morally acceptable form of day care for parents who are too self-absorbed to pay attention to their children. But the solution he offers—removing children from the education system and teaching them at home—perpetuates the unequal education opportunities that schoolchildren face in America today.

Despite its benefits, homeschooling is not a genuine option for everyone. The people who choose this alternative to the usual school system are, as Guterson admits, primarily middle-class families who already are best served by the education system. The poor and disenfranchised, for a number of social and economic reasons, don't or can't choose homeschooling and are forced to remain in schools that cannot provide a thorough education. To defend the unequal education that results, as Guterson does, by arguing that this discrimination is a cruel and permanent truth, is disquieting. In effect, Guterson would have homeschooling parents abandon millions of children to rot intellectually in a flawed educational system.

The homeschooling movement won't change the fact that suburban schools still benefit from significantly higher funding than inner city schools or the fact that many parents don't see the value of an education and therefore don't encourage their children to excel in it. Also unchanged will be the grievous truth that in most schools "basic" students are likely to serve meals in Foods I while "honors" students join leadership organizations and enroll in humanities courses. With these inequalities in mind, shouldn't parents already favored by the school system try to bring about a system more responsive to the educational needs of all children, no matter what their background? Public education should not be reduced to a second-rate safety net for families unable to teach their children to strive to learn.

Chris Graham
Montreal

David Guterson calls for parents to be the primary educators of their children, either by homeschooling them or something less extreme. I second his call, but as a part-time tutor of children in a Philadelphia public school, I can see that what he proposes is already the rule. The kids I work with all get their most valuable learning from home. By contrast, they have been systematically deprived by the school system. But this is not to say, as Guterson does, that the parents of these kids don't have enough "room in their souls for anybody to loom as large as themselves" because they have countenanced this educational deprivation. The majority of kids in this school come from

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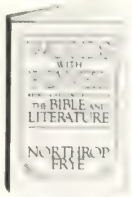
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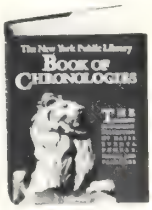
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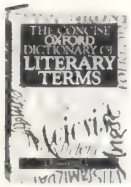
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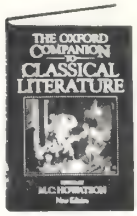
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families in which both parents work or in which there is only one parent. The idyll Guterson has made of his own family life—about which he is so defensive—is simply not a possibility for these kids. And furthermore, this is not a matter of "choosing less affluence in the name of more education." It's a matter of keeping a roof over their heads and clothes on their backs.

Guterson devotes one desultory paragraph to the problems of schools such as most of Philadelphia's. Public schools, he says, can only replicate oppressive realities, contributing inexorably to the systematization of "unfairness, inequity, and privilege." Any evidence to the contrary is illusory, since "a permanent underclass is the reality in this country." The tacit inference we're supposed to draw is that the sooner we give up on public schools, and turn to the task of realizing our own private pedagogy pastorals, the better off our kids will be.

The kids whom I teach need—instead of gloomy hopelessness—a movement that makes their education a national priority. Their parents are already devoted more than full-time to their emotional, spiritual, and physical sustenance. They don't need Guterson's crude reprimands or disdainful dismissal. They need schools that work—schools, if Guterson likes, that are "embedded in the life of the community, part of the mechanics of our democracy." Let Guterson's lovefest continue at home—I'm sure his kids will do fine. I'm not so sure about the kids I work with, and I'm not so ready as Guterson to write them off to a life nasty, brutish, and short in the "underclass." But I am also ready to tell their parents to get with homeschooling. They're doing their part—now we have to do ours.

Stephen R. Morris
Philadelphia

David Guterson correctly identifies the stultifying atmosphere of many schools. His own efforts to exploit his three sons' interests, to follow a subject where it leads, to make sure that the children have contact with other youngsters and other institutions are admirable. I am not concerned that

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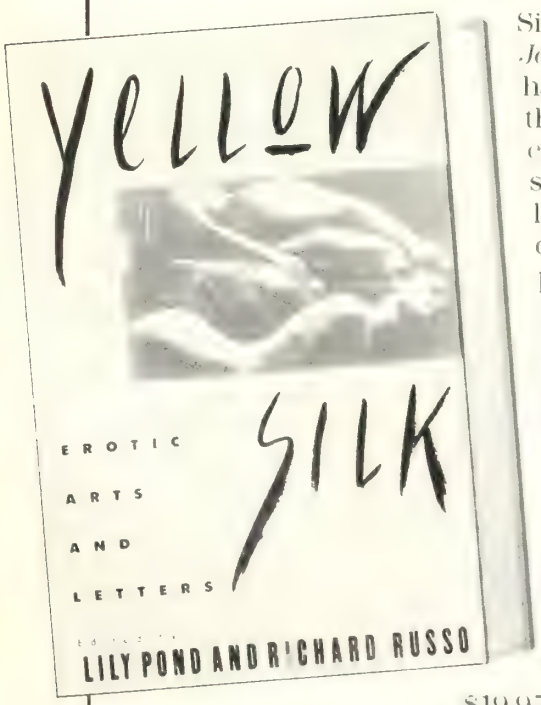
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he is a public school teacher or that he and his wife do not share home duties equally: These are contingent facts, not ones that bear directly on the merits of homeschooling.

Yet some of Guterson's remarks trouble me. How does he reconcile his belief that today's parents ought to be able to school their children with his characterization of these young parents as "terrifyingly selfish, persistently immature," and who "put more hours into their golf games or their wardrobes or into accumulating enough capital for the purchase of unnecessary luxuries than into their child's education"? And what anger stimulates the Hobbesian comment that "schools are in their social fabric nasty, competitive, mean-spirited, and status-conscious in the manner of the adult institutions they mimic"?

Those who advocate homeschooling need to consider their motivations carefully, contemplating possible negative as well as positive effects. Perhaps the most important questions to ask are: "Am I confident that my own skills and values are equal to this daunting task? Are there other individuals who can provide honest criticism? Am I mature enough to enroll the children in regular school if things do not work out as I hoped?"

Homeschooling is something akin to home medical care. For most of us, it makes more sense to work cooperatively with our local schools than to anoint ourselves as educational physicians.

Howard Gardner
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

As a high school student I see school from a better perspective than an adult can, and I was outraged by David Guterson's article. School means responsibility and organization, as well as adjustment to nasty teachers and irregular schedules. But if a homeschooled child forgets to do his homework, is he punished at home? I doubt it. He certainly isn't reprimanded in front of twenty classmates, which teaches him to deal with embarrassment. He can't be late to class at home. And he can't be praised in front of other students. Nor can



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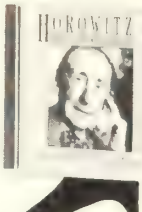
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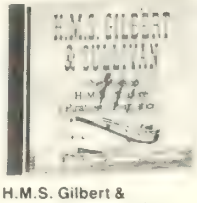
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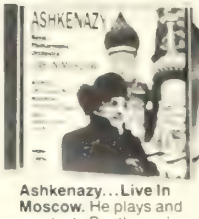
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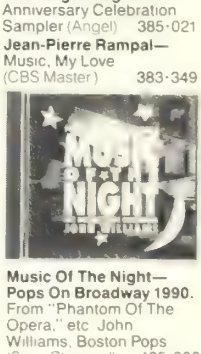
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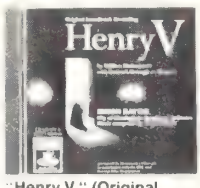
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one speak at graduation based solely on the basis of one's mother's recommendation.

Tara Hisert
Cobleskill, N.Y.

Guterson's diatribe against schooling is an essay of many parts. It's a cry for mid-life career counseling for burned out English teachers—those like Guterson who are only able to recognize "one or two good sentences" in a year of work from over one hundred students, for example. His essay is an apparently unconscious complaint against American capitalism and all those yuppie parents who keep driving their BMWs. The essay also is illogical: Guterson's main validation for homeschooling is the acceptance of these students by the nation s colleges. The hallowed names of Harvard and Columbia are invoked to bolster his argument. But Harvard and Columbia are *schools*.

In fact, the essay is itself the best argument against homeschooling: Guterson is apparently a forceful and unhappy man. His students in Bainbridge High School [Bainbridge, Washington] can try to learn from him as best they can but are fortunate that they may also hear other voices in the course of their education. Guterson's own children will not be so fortunate: They will hear the opinions and interpretations of only their parents. Given the illogical reactionary tone of the essay, these children are not to be envied.

Michael P. Healy
Hailey, Idaho

Despite his attempt to denigrate the social value of traditional schools, David Guterson misses the point that there are entire areas of educational experience that can *only* be gained in groups—orchestras, bands, choirs, dramatic presentations, and team sports. Kids who take part in successful programs of this sort view these group experiences as the most meaningful moments of school. Keeping children out of school deprives them of this crucial dynamic. There's no substitute—"violin lessons" at home, which Guterson schedules for his own children, just doesn't cut it.

Royal W. Stanton
Sedona, Ariz.

As a professional public educator who has observed and studied the recent renaissance of home education, I was gratified to read David Guterson's essay. I share his concern that our artificial, modern society commonly regards the massive, forced institutionalization of children under state authority and supervision as the most acceptable form of child rearing. Note the mounting demand for more tax-supported preschools and kindergartens to remove children from their homes before they are toilet trained. Need we remind ourselves that America's homes and America's

15 Reasons Why There Ar



chools have now reached the lowest evel of mediocrity in our history? Both have betrayed the birthright of our children. The home school has hus emerged as the most normal and noble response of concerned parents o that mounting crisis. It is heartening indeed to see home education eaffirming the roles of parents and re toring the full meaning of living, loving, and learning in a family-centered environment. There is ample evidence that parents with only high school diplomas are teaching as effectively as the teachers I've prepared in university program. Guterson states hat there are now 300,000 homeschoolers. I would estimate that figure o be closer to a million engaged in independent study at home today. Is it for everyone? No. But neither is forced institutionalization in a bell-to-bell, cell-to-cell regimen under state authority.

Sam B. Peavey
University of Louisville
Louisville, Ky.

Toast as Talisman

While I agree with Arthur Asa Berger that toast is a powerful social metaphor ["The Crux of Toast," Readings, December 1990], the relationship between toaster and toasted is far more complex than he suggests. For although it is correct to say that "the existence of the toaster implies the existence of sliced bread," the reverse is equally true. Wonder bread, the predecessor and king of all packaged sliced bread, was not invented until 1930, some eleven years *after* the Toastmaster toaster, the world's first automatic device, was patented. Sliced bread literally was made to be toasted.

In essence, each individual slice of American bread carries within itself the seeds of its own redemption. Just as every American child may grow to be president or vice president, so does every slice of bread, no matter how airy, white, or characterless, offer the golden promise of toast. Only circumstance—the lack of a toaster, in this [illegible] hinders the fulfillment of this promise.

[illegible] toast, then, is to ritually reenact, daily and in miniature, the American dream itself. Each morning, in a small corner of the kitchen, the transformation of bread into cake prefigures (we hope) our own successful [illegible] up the social ladder. It is as if, by toasting, we ourselves might be toasted.

Toast serves as a talismanic reminder of human potential; thus the tragedy lies not in toast, as Berger argues, but in us. To the Willy Lomans and Ralph Kramdens of the world—destined as they are to middling lives, forever cut off from their aspirations—an encounter with toast can never be anything more than a tragic experience. To most of us, however, it is a call to arms. The bell sounds, the toast springs up, the scent of a golden future wafts before us like an omen: Time now to go to work.

Alan Burdick
New York City

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NOTEBOOK

Brave new world

By Lewis H. Lapham

Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent.
—George Orwell

During the autumn advertising campaign meant to sell the American public on the prospect of war in Iraq, President Bush dressed up his gunboat diplomacy in the slogans of conscience and the costume of what he was pleased to call "the new world order." First and foremost, he had it in mind to prove to the lesser nations of the earth that any misbehavior on their part (any sacking of cities or setting of commodity prices without express, written permission from Washington) would be promptly and severely punished. Never, he said, would Saddam Hussein be allowed to receive any reward, profit, acclaim, benefit, or honor for his trespass in the desert. No, sir, by no means, under no circumstances, not while the United States still had soldiers and bombs to send eastward out of Eden.

The President's righteousness waxed increasingly militant as the merely political or commercial reasons for war proved inadequate to the occasion. When the expedient arguments failed (the ones about the price of oil, the preservation of American jobs and the American way of life, the protection of Israel, the likelihood of nuclear war, etc.), Mr. Bush shifted his flag to the higher ground of the moral argument, the one about the American obligation to enforce the laws of God. Behold, he said, the villainy of Saddam Hussein, an evil man committing acts of "naked aggression" in what was once the innocent paradise of Kuwait. Know, O doubting world, that America stands willing to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

By October the President had tuned his rhetoric to the pitch of intransigent virtue announced by Saddam Hussein. Saddam was talking about "rivers of blood," about the will of Allah and a holy war against the foreign infidel. Mr. Bush was saying that "no price is too heavy to pay" to defend the standards of Christian behavior in a world already too densely populated with thugs. In late November, in an interview on CNN and still summoning the faithful to a twelfth-century crusade, Mr. Bush looked firmly into the television camera and asked what I'm afraid he thought was a shrewd and high-principled question: "When you rape, pillage, and plunder a neighbor, should you then ask the world, 'Hey, give me a little face'?"

The answer, regrettably, is yes. Of course you ask the world for a little face, not only for a little face but for as much face as can be had at the going rates. Why else did three American presidents persist in the devastation of Vietnam, at the price of 57,000 American dead, if not for the sake of what they defined as "America's credibility," "America's honor," "America's image in the world"? Why else did Mr. Bush invade Panama if not to prove that America's military prowess deserved the compliment of the world's fear and applause? Why else have we sent 400,000 troops to the Persian Gulf if not to outbid Saddam Hussein in the display of aggression?

I write these lines on the seventeenth of January, the second day of Operation Desert Storm. Why else did Mr. Bush give the order to attack Iraq if not to ask of the world, "Hey, give me a little face"?

The phrasing of the President's question proclaimed his allegiance to the old world order, the one governed by force and the show of force. The autumn's diplomatic maneuvers made it clear that the White House meant to restore what used to be called the "Pax Americana."

Between August and January the United States paid handsome bribes for the votes of the Security Council at the United Nations but otherwise listened as inattentively to the counsel of its nominal allies as George Will might listen to the political views of the wine steward in an Argentine restaurant in Santa Monica. The alliance put together in the Persian Gulf, with whichever kings or kingdoms happened to be free on waivers from OPEC or the Arab League, might as easily have been arranged by the late John Foster Dulles.

Careless of the costs, knowing little or nothing of the languages, history, or cultural traditions of the Middle East, confident that the war with Iraq would be won in a matter of weeks if not within hours or days, the makers of American policy assumed (as did Saddam Hussein) that their own moral equations somehow were synonymous with the laws of nature and the will of God.

In opposition to the incessant mor-

alisms broadcast from the White House, a fair number of people in Washington, both in Congress and in the national media, offered tentative sketches of a world order that might not have been so easily understood by Saladin or Godfrey of Bouillon. They argued for patience, for the efficacy of economic sanctions, for an army under the command of the United Nations, for a coalition comprised of more or less equal interests, for the use of as little force as possible and then only as a defensive measure. They questioned the American capacity to balance the world on the scale of American justice or in the ledger of American commerce. From whom did we think we could borrow the money to pay for the imperial legions? Upon conquering the wicked city of Baghdad, whom did we hope to appoint to the office of proconsul?

The voices of doubt and restraint were lost in the din of the marching bands. Nobody in the Bush administration made the slightest attempt to imagine a future that didn't look exactly like the past. Nobody wished to understand the historical origins of Iraq's grievances, which have more to do with the British and Ottoman empires than with the United States. Nobody wished to restrain the predatory oil pricing that suits our own convenience. Nobody said anything about taking down the expensive military arsenals that we have so profitably sold to so many aspiring despots. Nor did anybody say much of anything about a decent settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute, about alternative fuels and the management of the world's energy resources, about redistributing the wealth of the Middle East in some way that might promote the chance of peace.

By trying to preserve the illusion of a balance of power along the lines set forth by Lord Palmerston or Kaiser Wilhelm, Mr. Bush and his nostalgic friends in Congress and the Pentagon seek to comfort themselves with the cheerful news that they live in an orderly and coherent world, or at least in a world in which order and coher-

[illegible] remain within the range of the [illegible] artillery.

The old world order assumes a distinction between naked and fully clothed aggression. On Sunday afternoons in Mozambique and Guatemala, law-abiding families vanish as abruptly from sight as did the law abiding citizens of Kuwait, but they leave so quietly and so often that they offer no affront to the harmony of nations. Through the autumn ad campaign crying up the prospect of war with Iraq, the Bush administration made little mention of the thirty-three other wars currently in progress in the world. Nor did our media think to make the point that our own society assumes a norm of violence that would frighten all but the most remorseless Arab. No other modern nation, whether capitalist or socialist or Christian or Muslim, shares the American tolerance for crime. The indexes of murder and theft in the United States (i.e., aggression dressed in old sneakers as well as by Brooks Brothers and Bijan) dwarf the

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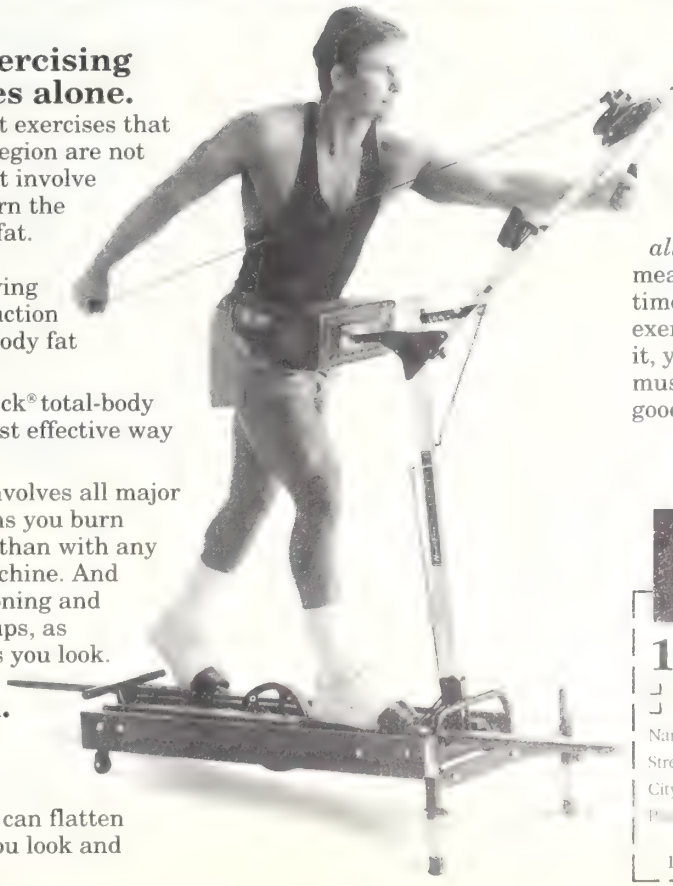
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comparative statistics in England, Libya, France, Germany, and Iran. As with the old game of power politics, the rich man's aggression provokes less censure than the poor man's aggression, which suggests that Saddam's fault can be found not only with his tank captains but also with his tailor.

But the idea of a balance of power implies the existence of reasonably long-term interests and alliances, and in a world subject to sudden technological revolutions as well as to the bewildering movements of peoples, currencies, markets, oil spills, and fervent nationalisms, who can be sure that anything will remain the same from one week to the next? So many forces and allegiances have been let loose in the world, and the major powers find so many ways in which to combine and recombine that even so subtle a statesman as Metternich would have been hard-pressed to change last year's enemies into next year's friends. What would have become of his certainties about Germany or Russia or the Polish frontier?

The fear of an ambiguous future in the aftermath of the Cold War gives rise to the wish for simplifications and a safe return to the past. Often on seeing Mr. Bush threaten Saddam with the scourge of war, I thought that he might be trying to substitute a lesser fear for a greater one, as if he would rather confront Iraq, no matter how despotic or heavily armed, than confront a world dissolved into anarchy, a world in which any terrorist with a crackpot dream of heaven can stuff an atomic weapon into an old suitcase and hold for ransom the life of New York or Washington.

Americans tend to think of foreign affairs in terms of sporting events that allow for unambiguous results. Either the team wins or it loses; the game is over within a reasonable period of time, and everybody can go back to doing something else. Much to everyone's regret, and regardless of the outcome of this winter's war in the Gulf, the events of the next twenty years seem likely to make nonsense of the sporting analogies. Too many powers can make their anger known to the world (if not at conference tables, then by means of an assassination or the poisoning of a reservoir), and the chains of causation have become much longer and more democratic than those conceived of by the Congress of Vienna.

If tomorrow morning at ten o'clock Iraq renounced its belief in Allah and withdrew its armies from Kuwait, the crisis in the world would not resolve itself into a finale by Busby Berkeley and the chorus line at the American Enterprise Institute. If it isn't the Iraqis, then it will be the Syrians; if not the Syrians, then the Brazilians or the Lithuanians or the South Africans.

The pervasive intuitions of dread give rise to a confusion of feeling that makes it difficult to interpret such phrases as "the national interest" or to guess whether the voices prophesying war mean to signal an advance or a retreat. The presentiment of a terrible looming just over the horizon of the news seeps through the voices of peo-



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ple pleading for surcease and disengagement, who argue that the United States has wasted enough blood and treasure in the ill-conceived crusades of the past thirty years, that the country should retire to the fastnesses of its coasts and leave the rest of the world to its murdering corruption.

But where is it safe to hide? Odysseus could return from his wanderings to Ithaca, but the modern world doesn't provide the refuge of home islands. Who is not hostage to the interconnectedness of the AIDS virus and the radioactive wind?

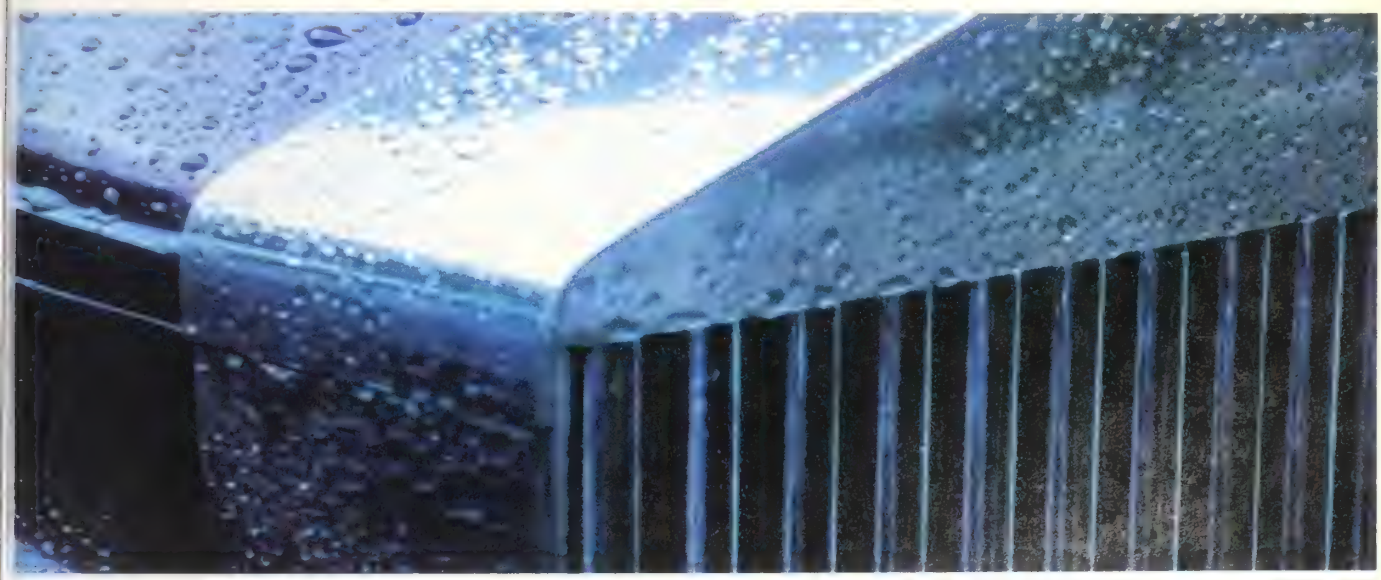
Within the world's military headquarters I'm sure that innumerable officers have drawn contingency plans for all kinds of wars—wars against revolutions, proxy wars, diplomatic wars, wars in Yugoslavia and Korea, wars for oil and bauxite and grain, wars fought with conventional weapons, amphibious wars, air wars, ground wars, nuclear wars. But how large will these wars become, and how many people might have to be killed before the bugles sound the retreat? Nobody likes to discuss this question in public (as witness the recent silence in Congress about our probable casualties in the Persian Gulf) because it has become difficult to find either a sufficiently high-minded principle or an inescapable material interest on behalf of which 250 million people might think it glorious to sacrifice their children.

The vagueness is traditional. In August 1914 none of the Allied or Central powers could explain its reasons for going off to the First World War. Four years later, after 10 million soldiers had died in the trenches, the governments in question still could not give a plausible reason for the killing. The best that anybody could do was to say that the war had been fought to end all wars, that its purpose had been to establish a "new world order" immune to the disease of power politics.

But who now expects the war in the Middle East to bring about a lasting peace or a better world? Who believes that the United States would risk annihilation to preserve a free and independent Abu Dhabi or the sacred anomaly of Israel?

Whether expressed in the Aesopian language of diplomacy or in the deployment of navies, the rules of power politics fail to take into account the number of people in the world who judge they have more to gain by the risk of war than by the prospect of negotiation. Most of the world is hungry, armed, and not much impressed by the rules of diplomatic procedure set forth with such earnest longing in the editorial pages of the *New York Times*.

Of the nations now buying weapons in the international arms markets, the majority must be considered young, both in terms of their existence as states (of the 159 nations represented at the UN, nearly half have come into being within the past thirty years) and in terms of the average age of their populations. In the industrialized West the average age of the inhabitants continues to rise; in the Third World the demographics go the



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The passions of transcendence seize on the young, and as more and more nations suffer the anxieties and enthusiasms of youth, they can be expected to confuse the purposes of government with the freedom of individuals. The doctrines of nationalism hold that certain nations emerge from the chaos of history as objects of divine favor; the states that interpret those doctrines with the fervor of youth presumably will conduct their foreign affairs as if they were affairs of the heart.

Since the end of the Second World War—probably since the end of the First World War—the supposedly civilized nations of the world have been noticeably unsuccessful at transmitting to the next generation the public virtues of patience and self-restraint. They have distributed instead a more profitable line of private goods, among them visions of God and definitions of the higher truth, as well as cameras and transistor radios. Within the arenas of domestic American politics the romanticism of eager factions has dissolved the common interest into a multitude of special interests, all of them warring with one another for the available money and authority.

Over the next ten years I can imagine a comparable spectacle in the arena of international politics. Together with single-issue lobbies in Congress, I can conceive of single-issue nations dedicated to the proposition that their own flag, their own folk songs, and their own way of making fish soup constitutes a foreign policy. At the same time they will find themselves armed with weapons capable of inflicting vast Oedipal punishments on an older generation perceived to be obstructive and corrupt. Absent an imperial peace imposed on a recalcitrant world by parental fiat (a task for which the United States possesses a notable lack of talent), I find it hard to imagine a political order balanced by a squadron of gunboats.

The more prosperous and settled a nation, the more readily it tends to think of war as a regrettable accident; to nations less fortunate the chance of war presents itself as a possibly bountiful friend. ■

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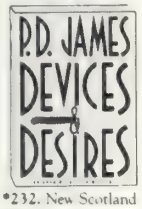
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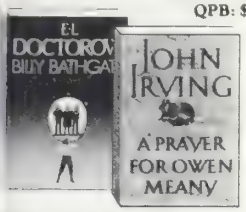
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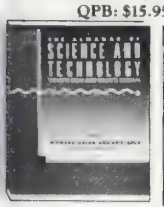
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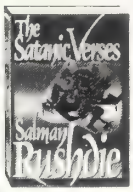
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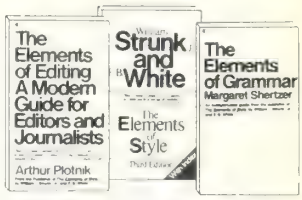
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HARPER'S INDEX

Rank of the Resolution Trust Corporation, among all U.S. financial institutions, in assets : 1

Percentage change, since 1989, in the amount of U.S. credit card debt that is at least 30 days past due : + 24

Percentage change, during 1990, in the average price of U.S. banks' common stock : − 25

Rank of the funeral industry, among those industries whose stocks earned the highest return last year : 1

Percentage of Americans who said in December that the country was heading in the wrong direction : 51

Percentage who said they approved of George Bush's performance as President : 57

Funding Congress has proposed for the Institute for Decision Making in Cedar Falls, Iowa : $1,000,000

Rank of U.S. Health and Human Services secretary Louis Sullivan, among the most often sued people in the world : 1

Number of months British prime minister John Major received public assistance in 1962 : 9

Estimated number of princes in Saudi Arabia : 6,500

Amount of oil used by the Pentagon last year, expressed as a percentage of total U.S. oil imports from Saudi Arabia : 43

Gas mileage of an M-1 tank, per gallon : 0.56

Number of car manufacturers worldwide that have built and tested models that get more than 67 miles per gallon : 7

Number of these cars that are currently on the market : 0

Percentage increase in the profits of the 11 largest oil companies since 1989 : 157

Total salary Drexel Burnham has paid two of its financial analysts since declaring bankruptcy last May : $1,933,332.20

Average medical deduction claimed by Americans earning more than $1,000,000 : $44,000

Number of medical doctors who belong to the Surfer's Medical Association, worldwide : 504

Percentage of American men who say they clean their navel every day : 42

Percentage of Americans who say they would like to have dinner with George Bush : 7

Percentage who say they would like to have dinner with Bart Simpson : 12

Payment David Letterman made to Miss USSR for appearing on his show last fall, in cartons of Marlboros : 4

Chances that an American between the ages of 16 and 24 is "very familiar" with the term *glasnost* : 1 in 5

Amount of food the Indian government has pledged to donate to the Soviet Union this winter, in tons : 20,000

Total amount of food other countries have pledged to donate to India this winter, in tons : 0

Average number of frogs the French eat each year : 200,000,000

Maximum fine for performing an animal sacrifice in Los Angeles : $1,000

Average number of Americans who are injured by chain saws each year : 36,000

Average number who are injured by clothing : 112,000

Percentage change, since 1989, in the number of debutantes at the New York Debutante Christmas Ball : − 46

Average age at which an American develops a phobia : 13.5

Percentage of R-rated movies that contain violence : 60

Percentage of X-rated movies that do : 46

Number of orgasms witnessed at the Masters & Johnson Institute in its first nine years of research : 14,000

Cash prize awarded by a St. Petersburg, Florida, bar to the winner of its weekly Fake the Big O Contest : $100

Average length of an erect penis, according to American men, in inches : 10

Average length, according to American women, in inches : 4

Number of muscles in an elephant's trunk : 100,000

Temperature reached by the tropical Voodoo Lily of Southeast Asia, during pollination : 110° F

Figures cited are the latest available as of January 1991. Sources are listed on page 74.
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READINGS

[Testimony]

OWNING UP TO THE RECESSION

Adapted from a statement by John Kenneth Galbraith given before the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources in January. Galbraith is professor emeritus of economics at Harvard University. His speech "Which Capitalism for Eastern Europe?" appeared in the April 1990 issue of Harper's Magazine.

My statement this morning concerns the most urgent domestic issue of our time. All have seen the newspaper headlines—the softening of industrial production, reduced consumer buying, deeply troubled banks, and, most important, job layoffs and unemployment. Leading economic indicators, as we all will have noted, are showing continued and nearly unprecedented weaknesses, and year-end unemployment was up sharply. Unemployment in December rose to 6.1 percent of the labor force. In Massachusetts it was 7.4; in Michigan, 7.3; in Texas, 7.2; and in California, 7.1. In the New York metropolitan area a full 10,000 jobs were lost last year.

Let us not waste time deciding between those who speak of a recession and those who admit only to a "meaningful downturn." Rather, let us remind ourselves what lies behind those numbers—personal and family trauma, the loss of self-esteem, the tight-lipped fear about the future, the wonder as to whether there will be a job and income soon or ever again.

There are three questions to be asked: What has caused this downturn in economic prospects? How serious does the recession promise to be? What must be done by way of remedy?

As to the cause of the recession, let there be no doubt. We are paying for the economic aberrations of the past decade. An era of explosive securities speculation and financial manipulation has come, as it always must, to its inevitable end. The corporate raids and leveraged buyouts have left a great number of our large enterprises with a heavy burden of debt that they now must service at a high cost to innovation, investment, and employment. Banks and the public have been left with a mass of questionable assets, including, along with much else, junk bonds. This, in turn, has put a tight limit on what institutions can lend or invest and what individuals—who, often out of innocence, bought the junk bonds—can now spend.

Additionally, and of more immediate consequence, we have come to the end of a period of extensive real estate speculation. This has brought the construction industry, notably in the Northeast, to a near halt. This industry is a large employer of blue-collar workers; these workers, in turn, are a large and growing component of the unemployed.

The real estate collapse has also left the banks with a large portfolio of bad loans, which sharply limits their capacity for other lending. The S&L disaster and larceny, especially in the Southwest and California, have also dried up another important source of housing-market and construction funds and, additionally, have left an excess of foreclosed real estate hanging

over an already weak real estate market.

Further, during this decade there was the heavy transfer of spendable income from the poor to the rich. The poor, perforce, always spend their income. The rich do not. For this we are now paying—the diminished flow of luxury spending is serving to further weaken the economy. (Quite a few of the stores that handle luxury goods are in trouble.) The case for a reasonably equitable distribution of income is usually made in social terms. It is also highly functional.

Finally, there have been the effects of what my fellow economists rejoice in calling macroeconomic policy. Throughout the last decade we had large budget deficits and the consequent threat of inflation, which was held in check by high interest rates. These interest rates restrained productive investment and housing expenditures—this is, of course, how monetary policy acts against inflation—thereby weakening our position in the world economy and creating a shortage of housing. Homelessness, let it be noted, is not a passing accident of time. It is the result of specific economic policy.

You will ask, perhaps, why I have not attributed any part of the present recession to the Middle East crisis. I have, indeed, a deep concern about the future there. To date, however, I do not believe this crisis has been a major factor in repressing the economy; the adverse economic developments were in process well before the attack on Kuwait. Let us not try to escape our domestic errors by placing blame on oil and the Arabs.

How long will the recession last? All easy answers to this should be regarded with deeply justified suspicion. Those who respond with facile assurance divide into two groups: those who do not know and those who do not know they do not know. The Great Depression of the Thirties lasted a full ten years. The reputations of the most respected and luminous economic and financial figures of the time suffered badly from their repeated predictions that it would very soon be over. I do not predict a similar disaster. I do urge that all predictions, however great the authority, be received with something between amusement and contempt.

It is, indeed, my feeling that the great welfare measures of this century—unemployment compensation, limited as it is; old-age security; public health care, however imperfect; welfare payments in general; farm price supports—have given the economy a resilience it did not have in earlier times. We need only reflect on the financial panic we would now be painfully enduring if we did not have bank and S&L deposit insurance. However, one thing concerning the future can be stated with confidence: The duration of the recession and the prospect of recovery depend extensively on what preventive action we take.

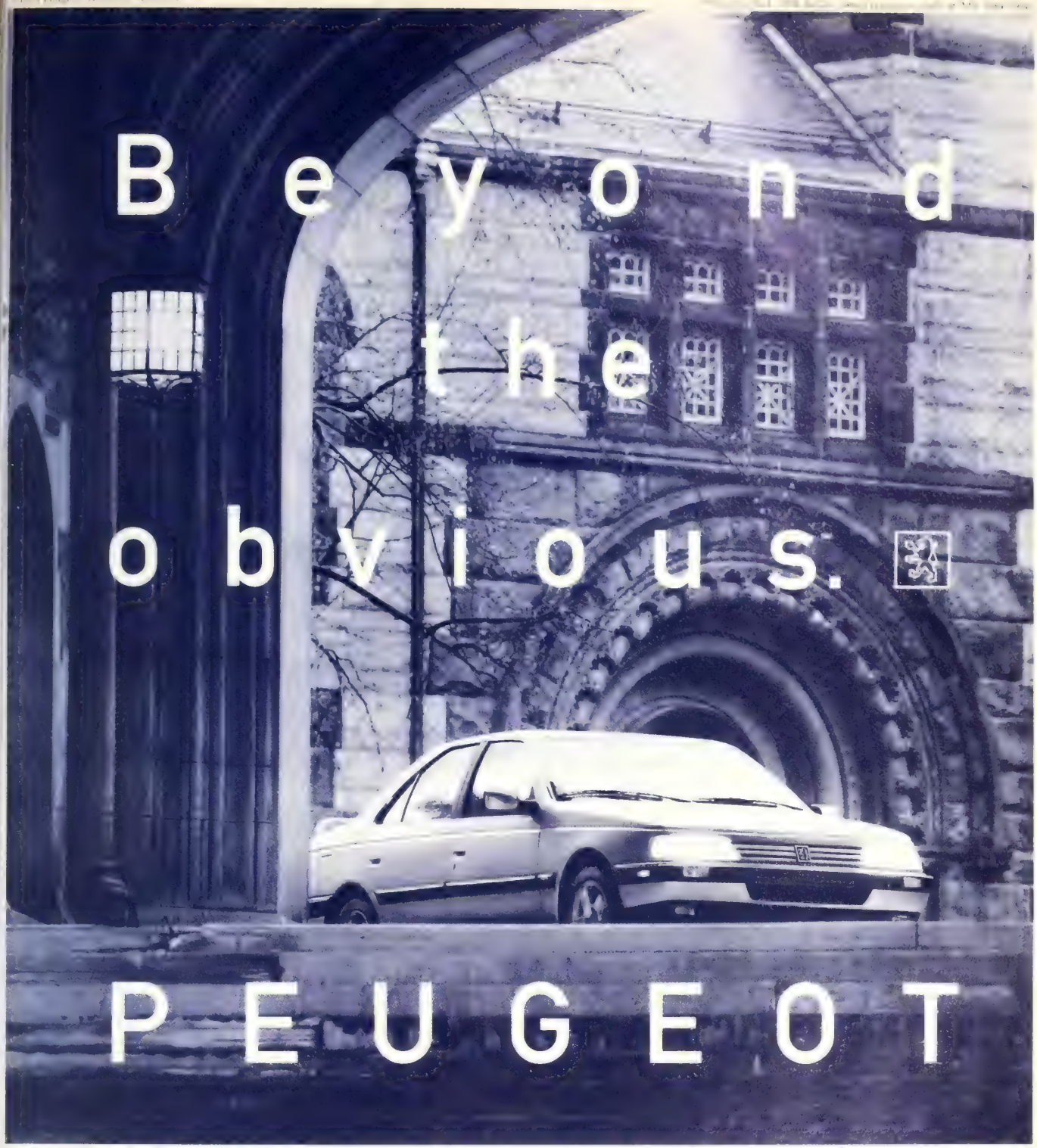
Turning to specific action, there are some wholly obvious steps that should now be taken. The Federal Reserve should make further and substantial reductions in interest rates. To do so, it will have to overcome its institutional bias. Customarily, we characterize the Federal

[Euphemisms]

YOU'RE DEHIRED

From "A Litany of Euphemisms for 'You're Fired,'" a list of terms used by corporations when firing employees, in the November 1990 issue of Executive Recruiter News, *a newsletter for executive search consultants published in Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire.*

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Downsizing
Right-sizing
Force reduction
Work force adjustment
Indefinite idling
Redundancy elimination
Involuntary separation
Skill-mix adjustment
Work force imbalance correction
Chemistry change
Negotiated departure
Redeployment
Destaffing
Dehiring
Degrowing
Dismissal
Axed
Canned
Let go
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[Management Tips]

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From the Office Manager's Handbook of People Power Strategies, *published by Prentice Hall Professional Newsletters in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. This pamphlet is distributed free to subscribers to the* Office Manager's Bulletin, *a biweekly newsletter.*

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"Wasn't this tried someplace else, where it flopped?"

"Just how solid are the people who worked up this plan?"

To resist wage demands:

"We may have to find new ways inside our company to make up for these higher rates; new kinds of automatic equipment, maybe?"

"We all want the best wages for everybody; but in today's economy, could this be the straw that breaks our back?"

To resist promoting someone who may be a threat to your power position:

"We need more time to learn just what kind of a person she really is; will she be one of us?"

"What are his long-term personal ambitions? Are they compatible with the company's interests?"

"Couldn't we be setting a bad precedent?"

"Wouldn't it be a shame if we moved too fast and blunted his drive?"

To inspire more loyalty:

"A few people may not understand all the good things you're doing here; all right if I make sure you're covered?"

"Everyone needs someone who can protect his future; I presume you know you can count on me?"

"I've spoken to some people about where I think you're going in your career; you don't mind, do you?"

Reserve as independent, but it is, in substantial measure, the instrument of the banking community. And bankers, it being their business to lend money, rejoice, as do all others, in receiving a good price for their product. Nevertheless, this must change, for no one should be in doubt that a policy that encourages producer investment, housing construction, and consumer borrowing depends on a much lower cost of money.

Second, we should for now suspend talk of a balanced budget. It will stand as one of the crucifying errors of our time that we ran large deficits throughout the last decade when we did not need them. However, it only adds to the error if we reverse that policy now that the economy is in recession. I do not rule out some tax adjustments, as I will later note. This, however, is not the time for a restrictive fiscal policy. Since my first service in the federal government—it was in the early New Deal days, a mere fifty-six years ago—I have seen much public action that was constructive, humane, and good. And some that was illogical, eccentric, and socially perverse. Of the latter I have thought myself rather a connoisseur. Rarely, however, have I seen anything quite so impressive in this regard as the efforts of the White House budget director, over the objections of the secretary of health and human services, to cut back, at this of all times, on administrative support for Medicare, Social Security payments for the disabled, prenatal care, health care, and generally for help to minority groups and low-income people.

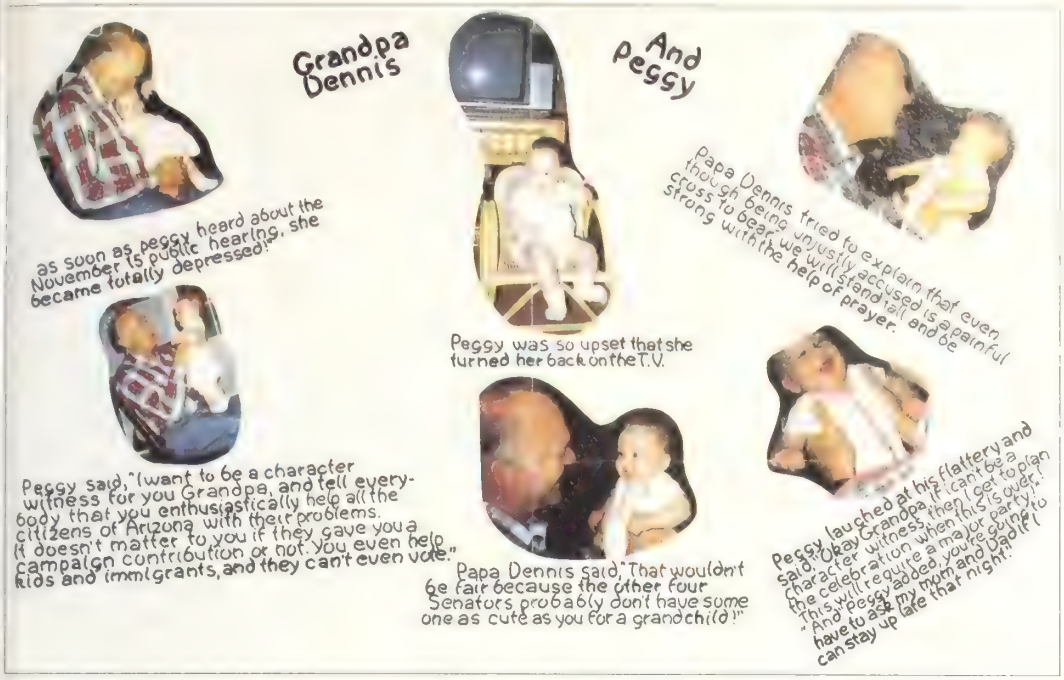
Third, now that the Cold War is over we must look to the employment efficiency of our public expenditure. For sophisticated weaponry, exemplified by SDI and the B-2 bomber, the yield of jobs per dollar of public expenditure is very low. For other public purposes—including housing, needed civilian public works, and elementary health care—the employment efficiency is much higher. There must now be a major shift away from low-efficiency spending.

Fourth, and of most direct importance, we should initiate a major investment in our public assets—an investment that is long overdue. This is the answer for the most vulnerable and depressed of our blue-collar industries, that of construction.

We all know that investment in our public facilities—federal, state, and local—has fallen far below need. Let us now create, under special emergency authority, a multibillion-dollar fund, which might be called the Emergency Employment and Facilities Fund, to correct and upgrade our public plant. Let the scale be influenced by what we accept as the necessary S&L bailout cost. The fund should be for federal needs, including federal buildings, parks, post

[Mailing]

SENATOR URGES GRANDFATHER CLAUSE



The eleven- by seventeen-inch card above, which features pictures of Arizona senator Dennis DeConcini with his four-month-old granddaughter, Peggy, was sent last November to 15,000 of the senator's supporters by Susan DeConcini, the senator's wife. Senator DeConcini, along with the other members of the "Keating Five," was the subject of public hearings held by the Senate Ethics Committee beginning in November. The committee investigated allegations that the legislators had improperly influenced federal banking regulators on behalf of Charles H. Keating Jr., the indicted former chairman of the Lincoln Savings and Loan Association.

offices, and, in conjunction with states and localities, the upgrading and improvement of highways, bridges, streets, airports, schools, parks, recreation, and other facilities.

As a gesture to fiscal conservatism, let there be an increase in corporate and higher-bracket personal income taxes to cover added interest costs and the amortization of the increased debt. The expansive effect of the expenditure will be prompt and substantial; the restrictive effect of the tax charges will, of course, be a small percentage spread over time and will have the offsetting compensation of improved efficiency from better public plant. No rational conservative can object seriously to a procedure wholly in keeping with established corporate financial practice.

There will be some shock at the enlargement of the public role of government I am proposing. Let those so shocked know that they bear responsibility both for continuing unemployment and for the increasingly inadequate, shabby, and even dangerous character of much of our public estate.

Finally, I mention two matters on which I would urge prompt action. Nothing in past times has so mitigated the personal tragedy of unemployment as the availability of unemployment insurance. This, in recent years, has declined seriously and painfully in its coverage. A decade ago, just under one-half of those unemployed received unemployment benefits. Now the fraction has fallen to one-third. I plead for prompt attention to this matter. The flow of purchasing power that such benefits assure, and the reduction in fear, hardship, and grief, will make an important contribution to overall economic stability.

Lastly, there is the continuing and deepening crisis of our central cities. Here the problem has been made worse in these last years by the curtailment in welfare expenditures—by the curious doctrine that the rich are not working because they have too little income, the poor because they have too much. Let us, at a minimum, take steps to restore the help to the urban poor and the disadvantaged that we took away during the Eighties—with such slight regard for the suffering and social turmoil that would result.

[Fund-raising Letter]

POINDEXTER AGONISTES

From a fund-raising letter sent to supporters last October by John M. Poindexter, the national security adviser to President Reagan from 1985 to 1986. Each letter contained an actual leaf; one is pictured below. Last June, Poindexter was sentenced to six months in prison for lying to Congress about his involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal. He is appealing his conviction. An earlier fund-raising letter sent by Poindexter appeared in the February 1990 issue of Harper's Magazine.

Dear Mrs.——,

I found this leaf while walking today, and I immediately felt an almost overwhelming tide of sorrow sweep over me.

And an equally overwhelming need to share these thoughts with you, Mrs.——.

Somehow, I have been so absorbed in the painful events of the last few months that I missed the change of season.

I hadn't realized until today that it's autumn now.

And it suddenly occurred to me how painfully symbolic the fall is to me—especially this year.

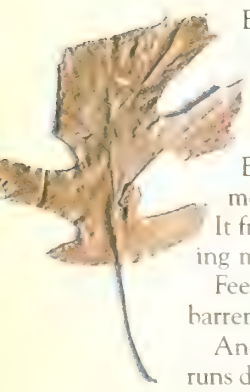
Because in the face of my conviction, and pending my appeal, I know that time is slipping away.

I have no way of knowing when I may be forced to leave my family and go to prison, Mrs.——.

And that thought is as chilling to me as any autumn wind.

In fact, it bites into my spirit with all the force and numbing power of a bitter midwinter blast.

And that's why I needed so desperately to write to you today, Mrs.——.



Because the winter I now face is more than just a simple change of season.

The winter winds I know I will have to endure can't and won't be escaped by a warm fire.

Because this winter wind blows inside of me—and refuses to leave.

It freezes my spirit and numbs my hope, leaving me frighteningly cold.

Feeling broken, bruised, and, worst of all, barren.

And I must tell you, it's a barrenness that runs deeper and hurts more than the bleakest of winter scenes.

Because it leaves me alone, asking why.

Wondering when it will end.

Struggling to go on.

Wind-whipped within my soul.

And I have reached out to you now because I can't bear the thought of that spiritual winter without the warmth of your companionship.

Your words of understanding.

And the support only you can bring to my struggle through this barren and bitter season.

When I found this leaf while walking today, a deep, almost overwhelming feeling of sorrow washed over me.

And my thoughts immediately turned to you.

Because time is slipping away.

That's why I am forced to turn to you once again for your support and help.

As you know, in addition to my public humiliation, in addition to the personal and emotional agony my family and I have endured, I am now left with a staggering legal debt.

A debt that totals more than my entire life's income.

And I simply can't continue my battle to prove my innocence without your $35 today.

As I prepare for the icy blast I know will rip through the warmth of my home, I need your $35 today.

I don't think I can face the cold days ahead without your gentleness and your friendship.

Please, Mrs.——, the leaf I have sent you is a mere symbol of the winter that is before me.

I desperately need your warmth—as I desperately need your $35 support.

In deep gratitude,
John M. Poindexter

[Glossary]

LOOKISTS LOOK OUT

From a glossary of terms distributed in orientation workshops by the Office of Student Affairs at Smith College, in Northampton, Massachusetts, to students entering college housing.

DEFINITIONS

Factors of Oppression in General

Prejudice: a preconceived judgment, opinion, or assumption about issues, behaviors, groups of people, etc.

Discrimination: treating an issue/person/behavior differently based on a prejudice. (This is the basis of all oppression.)

Institutional power: access to resources and privileges (economic, networks, acceptance) within the dominant culture and its institutions.

Oppression: discriminating against a person, or a group of people, on the basis of certain ste-

Photograph by Barry Marcus

NATURE'S SPLENDID STONES HAVE A MYSTICAL POWER TO ATTRACT US.

WHY ARE WE BEWITCHED BY NATURE'S COLORFUL STONES?

DIAMONDS, newly mined, look like nothing more than ordinary gravel. But transformed by human hands into artifacts of incredible beauty, they become, for their size, among the costliest items on earth.

Down through the centuries pharaohs and kings went to extreme lengths to acquire the largest and most beautiful jewels. Pearls may have been the first gems used for adornment. But in Cleopatra's time it was the emerald that was cherished, and later was praised in the Bible. It was even once believed that when held under the tongue an emerald conferred the power to predict the future.

Whatever their shape, size, or color, the splendid stones that took nature millions of years to make are still revered and coveted.



Born in the cauldron of the earth's interior, precious stones have fascinated humankind for thousands of years. Today, a dazzling diamond or a fiery ruby can capture universal attention and admiration as can little else in nature.

Some say it's their rarity or their value. But one look at the British Crown Jewels or the 28-carat Agra diamond will reveal the beauty and brilliance of nature's awe-inspiring creations that truly captivate us.

And now you can be bewitched by the story of "Splendid Stones," an all-new National Geographic Special on Public Television produced by the National Geographic Society and WQED/ Pittsburgh and underwritten by the people of Chevron.

Programs like this represent Chevron's response to your need for knowledge of places, people and nature.

This is but one of four Specials this year designed to explore, inform and give thought to television.

Tune in Wednesday, March 13th. Check your local listings for show times on PBS.

Do people believe that awareness of the world around us should be an essential ingredient of television?

People Do.

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reotypes, generalizations, and attitudes. Oppression of groups of people is possible only with the component of institutional power.

Specific Manifestations of Oppression

As you can see from the above definition of oppression, people can be oppressed in many ways because they are perceived to be different. As groups of people begin the process of realizing that they are oppressed and why, new words tend to be created to express the concepts that the existing language cannot. Thus some of the words below may be familiar to you, while others may be new.

Ableism: oppression of the differently abled by the temporarily able.

Ageism: oppression of the young and the old by young adults and the middle-aged, in the belief that others are unable to take care of themselves.

Classism: oppression of the working and nonpropertied classes by the upper and middle classes.

Ethnocentrism: oppression of cultures other than the dominant one in the belief that the dominant way of doing things is the superior way.

Heterosexism: oppression of those of a sexual orientation other than heterosexual.

Lookism: the belief that appearance is an indicator of a person's value; the construction of a standard for beauty/attractiveness; and oppression through stereotypes and generalizations of both those who do not fit that standard and those who do.

Racism: the belief that one group of people are superior to another and therefore have the right to dominate.

Religious discrimination: oppression of religions other than the dominant one.

Sexism: stereotyping of males and females on the basis of their gender; the oppression of women by society in the belief that gender is an indication of ability.

PREFERRED TERMS

Below is a list of terms used by groups of people to identify themselves. Historically, these groups have been named by other people, and the context has often been derogatory. It is important to realize that naming people is a symbol of the power one has over them to define who they are; naming oneself reclaims that power.

These terms are often subject to change depending on the process of self-examination that the group is going through. While this may be confusing, it is necessary to understand that these groups have come together after centuries of being treated in oppressive ways. Remember that while it may help you to know the terms below if they are unfamiliar, the most important thing about a name is whose name it is. If in doubt, ask the person how they refer to themselves—after all, it's their name.

Names Self-chosen by Groups with a Mutual Identity

Bisexual: gender-neutral term preferred by people who are open to intimate relationships with persons of either gender.

Differently Abled: term created to underline the concept that differently abled individuals are just that, not less abled or inferior in any way (as the terms "disabled," "handicapped," etc., imply). "Physically challenged" is also accepted.

Nontraditional-Age Student: a person whose traditional undergraduate education was interrupted and who has made the decision to return and complete it.

[Telephone Transcript]

SCIENCE'S LITMUS TEST

Below is an edited excerpt from a transcript of a thirty-minute telephone call from Jonathan Piel, the editor of Scientific American, *to Forrest M. Mims III, a science writer, on October 4, 1989. In May 1988, Mims, who has published more than sixty books on science, applied to write The Amateur Scientist column for* Scientific American; *the column features experiments that science enthusiasts can do at home. In July 1989, Piel indicated to Mims that he would like him to take over the column and invited him to the magazine's New York City office to discuss the position. During the New York meeting, after Mims mentioned that he had written for Christian magazines, Piel asked Mims whether he accepted Darwin's theory of evolution. Mims, a creationist, stated that he did not. Several telephone conversations between Mims and editors at the magazine took place during the next few months, including this one, which was taped by Mims without Piel's knowledge. During this conversation, Piel agreed to print three columns Mims had submitted; the last one appeared in the October 1990 issue. In August 1990, Mims received a letter from the magazine's legal counsel stating that "*Scientific American *has decided to cease any further business dealings with you."*

JONATHAN PIEL: The problem lies, as nearly as I can make out, in the following area: namely, that you've got certain attitudes and beliefs that are in conflict with editorial positions and trends and traditions in this magazine. Okay, so



Rainforest, a painting by Lauretta J. Hogin, from a show of her work called "Whose Woods Are These," held last fall at the Peter Miller Gallery in Chicago. Hogin's work will also be included in a group show held at the gallery this month. Hogin lives in Chicago.

what? Well, the *what* is this. I'm sure that you're a man of honor and integrity. That's very clear and obvious. And I'm sure that you would never try to use your column to express views that were contrary to our editorial policy and traditions. And you've also assured me that you would not express such views in a context where you would be identified as a contributor to this magazine. That may be well and good. But the problem still exists that if you were The Amateur Scientist columnist for *Scientific American* and some third party saw this contrast, it would be impossible for us to stop our name from being used in a way that could be damaging to causes and policies which we and the vast majority of our contributors believe in. And, you know, that's a problem I'm really wrestling with.

FORREST M. MIMS III: In other words, you are suggesting that if I were talking to somebody in the media, for example—are you suggesting that maybe they would expose this or something?

PIEL: Yeah, sure, that would be one possible way this kind of thing could happen. Another possible way could be that creationists, advocates of adopting a textbook in Texas or somewhere, would say, Why, even *Scientific American* is in favor of this position. Their columnist is on record as believing that creationism deserves equal attention in the schoolroom. You know, someone could put words in your mouth.

MIMS: Well, you know, that is so utterly hypothetical.

PIEL: That's the kind of hypothetical I've got to watch out for as editor of the magazine.

MIMS: Listen, I sympathize with where you're coming from. But I totally disagree. For all both of us know, there is a Democrat or a Republican or a Marxist on board the magazine and somebody could do the same thing. Prior to the visit to your offices, there was never even a hint that religion would become an issue.

PIEL: Forrest, come on, that's why I had the meeting with you. You know, I didn't know—you were just a voice on a telephone and a name on a piece of paper. That's why that kind of meeting is had, so two people can get to know each other. As a result of that meeting, I heard you say things that awoke serious reservations that were not there before.

MIMS: Well, you asked me if I accepted Darwin's theory of evolution, and I said no.

PIEL: Stephen Jay Gould, as you point out in your letter, in some sense doesn't accept it either, but I think that anyone who really views—

MIMS: He would have answered, "No, but." I answered, "No, and here's why." I have read many of his papers, and he makes a brilliant case for punctuated equilibrium.

PIEL: But, you know, Darwin is not libeled [in Gould's interpretation]. Darwin is nice. There's a real difference between a Gouldian takeoff on Darwinism and a flat rejection of evolution.

MIMS: Look, I really need, you know—

PIEL: There's no question that on their own merits the columns are fabulous. If you don't do them for us you ought to do them for somebody, because they're great.

MIMS: If I'm not good enough to write for *Scientific American*—

PIEL: Forrest, that's not—Come on, I just made it very clear to you what the issue is.

MIMS: Well, I'm sorry, if my belief system does not qualify me to write for *Scientific American*, then my entire career is totally fractured. Let me put it this way: My wife is Hispanic, and when we go to restaurants, people make fun or make snide remarks. Can you relate to how we might feel about that?

PIEL: Very deeply.

MIMS: We feel very deeply about that. Being discriminated against is not fun.

PIEL: As far as the issue of discrimination, you know, there is no discrimination here.

MIMS: It's absolute discrimination.

PIEL: Forrest, a different analogy would be whether the Democratic National Committee is right in refusing to print an essay by Ronald Reagan.

MIMS: And a religious magazine doesn't have to accept a contribution from an atheist. That is totally allowed. But nonreligious institutions and nonpolitical institutions are simply prohibited from discrimination based on age, race, gender, and, of course, religious beliefs.

PIEL: Oh no, I think the former analogy is more accurate. I wish you wouldn't bring that implication in here, because I totally respect your right to express your opinions and hold them. But I also have a right as an editor to control what opinions are expressed in my magazine—

MIMS: Absolutely. And you could fire me the minute I did it.

PIEL:— or that become associated with my magazine.

MIMS: I really think your concern is highly exaggerated. I've been in this business for nineteen years, and these things just don't come up.

PIEL: I've been in this business a few years myself, and I've seen the shrapnel fly from unexpected directions. What you've written is first-rate. That's just not an issue. It's the public relations nightmare that is keeping me awake.

MIMS: Well, you know, I look at it from the other side. I see a public relations nightmare if magazines discriminate.

[News Analysis]

HELLFIRE IN HOLLYWOOD

From a transcript of the November 7, 1990, 700 Club, a religious television talk show broadcast on the Christian Broadcasting Network. The following exchange, between Pat Robertson and co-host Sheila Walsh, took place after CBN reported on a fire that had destroyed much of Universal Studios the night before. In 1988 Universal distributed The Last Temptation of Christ, *which, according to the news report, "many Christians asked [the studio] to yank."*

SHEILA WALSH: When something like this happens, people wonder about the judgment of the Lord. Does this fit into that category?

PAT ROBERTSON: Well, it could have been an accident. It could have been an overloaded electric circuit. It could have been arson. It could have been anything—that's what most people would say.

I had a man—he happened to be a horse trainer from Kentucky—he came to me on Monday. He said, "I've got to talk to you; I've heard from the Lord."

"All right," I said. "What did the Lord tell you?"

The man said, "God is going to judge the entertainment industry in Hollywood that has been spewing out things around the world that have been corrupting the lives of people. It will be destroyed and will not rise again." He said that on Monday. There's a fire on Tuesday. It's interesting that Universal—they produced *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which many of us thought was blasphemous in the extreme—finds this kind of activity taking place. I don't have any revelation personally, but it is certainly something one should consider.

We're accused of being obsessed with perfection, precision and meticulous attention to every detail. Thank you.



The little things on a flight tell you a lot about an airline. So you'll notice that at Lufthansa, your drink and meal arrive at the same time. And that your electronic headset is free even in Economy Class. Or if you don't want to eat, drink or watch movies, you can get a "Do Not Disturb" sign. Of course, the way our crew works together also adds to your flight. Things like these show our passion to make your flight enjoyable. One you feel in everyone at Lufthansa. From the wine steward who inspects every bottle to the pilot who gets you there on time. A passion for perfection that ensures you the best flying experience possible.

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PIEL: I refuse to accept that characterization. If you're going to keep saying that, this conversation is over. I'm not discriminating. I'm exercising my constitutional right, sir, to protect an institution that I love and the values for which it stands. And I may add that the behavior of some of your co-believers is a profound violation of First Amendment principles.

MIMS: What co-believers? I don't know who you're talking about. I know what my views are, but —

PIEL: You're telling me that I'm discriminating; I'm telling you that I am not. Why don't we just leave it at that and try to conduct the rest of this conversation as gentlemen.

MIMS: All right, we'll leave off the discrimination. I just want you to know that I've been very troubled about the whole matter of religion being brought up.

PIEL: I have been wrestling with this question. I've been very honest with you about laying it out. You have been equally honest with me about what you would do, and I accept that. But there is the irreducible danger that third parties could make use of your political positions and your firmly held beliefs to misuse the good name of this magazine. And, you know, that's a risk that I have to weigh very carefully.

MIMS: Well, I—

PIEL: That's all there is to it.



This cartoon, "Every Letter Counts," by Ronald Searle, was sold last November at a charity auction held at Christie's in London to raise money for the Dyslexia Institute of Middlesex, England.

[Vignettes]

THE NEW JERUSALEM

From "Jerusalem—Fall 1990," by Aaron Back, in the January/February issue of Tikkun: A Bimonthly Jewish Critique of Politics, Culture & Society *published in Oakland, California. Back wrote this piece in late October, two months after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and shortly after three Israelis were stabbed to death by a Palestinian in the town of Baka. The killings were an act of revenge for the nineteen Palestinians killed earlier in the month on the Temple Mount. Back teaches at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.*

1. Friday, in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Baka, there are no braided challahs for sale at the corner bakery. On the shelves I see only the round ones, the kind baked on holidays. Earlier in the week, a block away, three neighbors were stabbed to death by a single Palestinian. For the next few days all Palestinians are barred from entering Jerusalem. Only they know how to bake the braided challahs.

2. In a ground-floor apartment in Baka, a couple prepares for the funeral of their son-in-law, murdered outside their door earlier that morning. In the apartment above them another family, prominent peace activists, sit with shutters drawn as cries of "kill the leftists" rise up from the street. A neighbor tries to quiet the crowd, her voice overpowered by the man standing next to her. He yells, "You have no right to speak here, you're a guest in the neighborhood." She has lived in Baka for twenty-two years. He has lived there for thirty. Behind them stands an Arab house. Its original occupants fled in 1948 and are not present to offer their case for seniority in the neighborhood.

3. Hours after the Baka killings, I receive a call from our landlady, a woman we barely know. She tells me that she has just heard the news on the radio and is calling to find out if we are safe. At times of national tragedy, she, like most Israelis, displays a concern that reflects the best ideals of a caring community. A week later, life has returned to normal, and she calls again to raise our rent by 50 percent.

4. Walking in East Jerusalem the week of the stabbings, I am frightened. For the first time



The billboards above are part of a series of eleven located on U.S. Highway 93 outside Denver, Colorado, near the gates of the Rocky Flats nuclear-weapons plant. The billboards, which were unveiled last November by Greenpeace, protest the Department of Energy's plan to reopen the plant, which has been idle since November 1989. Until the Greenpeace posters were mounted, the billboards had been blank for two years as a result of a boycott by a local environmental organization called Citizens Against Billboards on Highway 93. The group has called Greenpeace's use of the billboards an example of "immorality" and "opportunism."

since the beginning of the *intifada*, I am aware of looking Jewish in East Jerusalem and ask a friend who lives in Ramallah to accompany me. He tells me that he is now afraid to walk around even West Jerusalem.

By the Damascus Gate, a black-cloaked Hasidic Jew passes a Palestinian dressed in a robe and kaffiyeh. Each carries an identical cardboard box. Inside is a plastic crib for use during a poison-gas attack. The instructions read: "After placing the infant in the protective infant carrier, all treatment of the infant must be performed by using the glove sleeve. DO NOT OPEN until directions are given to take off the protective masks." In the air this week: common fear about a threat that does not differentiate between religion and nationality.

5. I am in the Ministry of Interior, getting my papers in order to receive my gas mask. The office is packed with Russian immigrants, there to get their citizenship papers. The overworked clerk is beside herself with the scores of people congregating around her desk and spilling over into the hallways. Most of the Russians do not speak Hebrew; she knows no Russian.

Her impatience grows as the morning progresses. Finally, completely losing her cool, she begins to scream at the new immigrant standing before her: "I hate Russians, you Russians are all shit, why don't you go back to where you came from and leave us in peace?"

The Russian, dressed in imitation jeans, smiles through gritted gold teeth and backs away. For years, he has stood in similar lines in the Soviet Union, withstood the abuse of the system, and learned to survive. No doubt he has faced clerks far surlier than this one. He goes back to the end of the line, determined to try again in this, the country of his people.

6. On the first wintry night in Jerusalem, my wife and I go to the reunion of the Lamaze class we'd finished earlier in the summer. We sit together with the other "graduates," all of us proudly showing off our new babies. We swap stories of coping with the early months. Justin tells us that he has found a surefire remedy for calming his crying baby when all else fails. He lifts up his pant leg to reveal the revolver tucked in its ankle holster.

Later, he explains that Israel's policy of house demolition is no more severe than forms of collective punishment found in the United States. There, too, a family can lose their house through foreclosure when their breadwinner is sent to jail. Justin works in the Human Rights Office of the Ministry of Justice.

[Reminiscence]

IN A BAROQUE LAND

From The Soccer War, *a collection of Ryszard Kapuściński's reporting from the Third World, to be published next month by Knopf. The title piece appeared in the June 1986 issue of* Harper's Magazine. *Kapuściński, who lives in Warsaw, is the author of* The Emperor *and* Shah of Shahs. *Translated from the Polish by William Brand.*

In the autumn of 1967, I left Warsaw for five years in Latin America. My first stop was Santiago, Chile, a bizarre architectural concoction built like a floating miniature Manhattan, a sea of town houses done in the perverse and capricious style of the Spanish secession—the luxurious and exclusive districts like Los Leones, Apoquindo, and Vitacura—and then, on the outskirts, the endless wooden lean-tos known as *callampas*, full of the proletariat, the poor, and all sorts of riffraff. I had always taken the Chileans for peaceful people, easygoing and even effete—the city contains a multitude of cosmetics parlors, where gentlemen are given pedicures and have their nails painted—until suddenly, the day after the death of Salvador Allende, many of those nails turned out to be claws.

Upon arriving in Santiago I went to a rental bureau, where they gave me a map of the city and a list of suitable addresses. I began hunting down the houses and inspecting vacant lodgings. In this way I discovered a world I had never known existed. The owners of these furnished apartments were aged ladies, widows, divorcées, and old maids in slippers, bonnets, and furs. After greeting me, they would lead me around improbably cluttered rooms, then name some fantastic sum of money to be paid as rent, and finally bring out the lease, which included not only the terms of the agreement but also a list of the contents of the apartment. This list was a book, a volume, which could serve as a fascinating psychological document about the madness to which people can be led by their avarice and the impulse to possess unneeded objects. The lists specified hundreds—no, thousands—of meaningless gadgets, figurines, kitties, coasters, wall hangings, pictures, vases, candleholders, birds made of glass, plush, brass, felt, plastic, marble, artificial silk, bark, wax, satin, lacquer, paper, nutshells, wicker, seashells, whalebone, of gewgaws, thingamajigs, doodads, and whatchamacallits. Every one of these apartments was carefully filled to the ceiling with an inventory of this junk, kneaded together, jammed into a vortex of knickknacks and fiddle-faddle of which the ladies would say the most insignificant bauble was touching, beautiful, and priceless.

Later I figured out that there was an unceasing circulation of things of no use to anyone in these middle-class neighborhoods, that on every occasion some thing of no use to anyone is given as a gift and custom enjoins that the gift be reciprocated in the form of some other thing of no use to anyone, which is then placed (laid, hung) beside the other things of no use to anyone. After years of giving and receiving (buying, winning) gifts, each apartment thus turns into a great warehouse of things of no use to anyone.

Later still it dawned on me that half the shops in these neighborhoods deal exclusively in all sorts of trinkets, mascots, and bric-a-brac, and that this is an excellent trade that brings in heaps of profits. After having spent years among Africans whose only property is (in many cases) a wooden hoe and whose only food is a banana plucked off the branch, this absurd avalanche of possessions that came tumbling down upon me every time I opened a door crushed and discouraged me. I saved myself with the thought that this was all a false introduction to the world of Latin America, which had to be, I told myself, different.

In reality, however, the residences of these old ladies were simply a pathological and kitschy manifestation of Latin America—that is, the universal prevalence of the baroque: baroque not only as a style of aesthetics and thought but also as a general commitment to excess and eclecticism. There is a lot of everything here and everything is exaggerated; everything wants to impose itself, shock, knock the beholder sideways. It is as if we had poor vision, weak hearing, and an imperfect sense of smell; as if we would simply be incapable of noticing anything that presented itself in a moderate or modest form. If there is a jungle, it has to be enormous (the Amazon); if there are mountains, they have to be gigantic (the Andes); if there is a plain, it must be endless (the Pampas); if there is a river, it has to be the biggest (the Amazon). People of every possible race and cast of complexion: white, red, black, yellow, métis, mulatto. All cultures: Indian, Anglo-Saxon, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Hindu, Italian, and African. Every possible and impossible political orientation and party. An excess of wealth and an excess of poverty. Gestures full of pathos and a flowery language with a multitude of adjectives. Marketplaces, bazaars, booths, and displays piled high and straining under the weight of fruit, vegetables, flowers, clothes, cooking vessels, tools—all of it constantly multiplying itself, propagating under the ground, on the stones, on counters, in hands, in a hundred

colors, its brightness and contrasts striking, exploding. This is not a world you can walk through with a calm head and an indifferent heart. You force your way through with difficulty, powerless and feeling as lost as when you look at a Diego Rivera fresco or read the prose of José Lezama Lima. Fact is mixed with fantasy here, truth with myth, realism with rhetoric.

I spent a long time forcing my way through that underbrush, the exuberance, the facades and the repetitions, the ornamentation and the demagogy, before I reached the person, before I could feel at home among these people and recognize their dramas, their defeats, moods, romanticism, their honor and treason, their loneliness.

♦

Describe the story of the Bolivian Army sergeant, Mario Terán, who shot the wounded Che Guevara dead. Two days later he began to feel afraid. He stopped answering orders or questions. The army discharged him. To disguise himself, he went around in dark glasses. Then he began to be afraid of the dark glasses, because he thought they would serve as a mark of recognition for the avengers of Guevara. He locked himself in his house and did not go outside for a long time. But then he began to fear his house, since it was like a trap where the partisans hunting him could easily lay hold of him. He stopped drinking, afraid that every liquid contained poison. He wandered off in an unknown direction for two days. On the evening of the second day he shot himself in the neighborhood of the small, poor village of Madre de Dios.

♦

About what happened to my friend Pedro Morote, a Peruvian. As a young boy Pedro declared war on the upper classes and fought in a partisan unit led by his friend the poet Javier Heraud. In May 1963 they walked into an ambush in Puerto Maldonado, and Heraud, then twenty-one, tried to escape across a river but was shot dead by the police. Pedro managed to get away and went into hiding. When the army later seized power, times changed, and Pedro reemerged in the struggle against the upper classes as an agricultural-reform activist. We drove together to the most out-of-the-way Indian villages, where Pedro was distributing land to the poverty-stricken and benighted peasants. One day, on his return from one of these expeditions, Pedro learned that a friend of his had died and left him a considerable sum of money. In an instant everything changed. The partisan and reformer opened one of the most expensive and elegant night spots in Lima, aimed at the upper-class market. Whoever turned up there—it was called La Pulmonía—could see a thickset, stocky, brown-haired man in a dinner jacket circulating among the tables, alert, contented (business was good) and accommodating. That was Pedro. He had put on a lot of weight, but he was brisk and strong. As he drifted through the room, he was humming something under his breath. It is doubtful that any of the elegant clients knew that Pedro was crooning the verses of

[Brochure Copy]

THE LONG GOOD-BYE

From the brochure for the Life Coffin, sold by Tibbetts Woodworking in Windsor, Massachusetts. The coffin, pictured below, costs $365 for "knotty eastern white pine"; $505 for oak or cherry.

What Is a Life Coffin?

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The coffin lid hangs on the back of the coffin while it is being used as a bookcase. When you're ready for burial, the lid is attached with maple dowel pins. No liner is included.

Why Would Anyone Buy a Life Coffin?

Death is an inevitable part of your life. Buying a coffin now can help begin a process of education and acceptance: By seeing your coffin every day, you will be reminded of the preciousness of your physical life. This perspective on your daily hassles can bring you to celebrate the miracle of your life.



A Life Coffin will act as a catalyst for discussion with your family and friends, helping you to open up to difficult feelings concerning your death and funeral. And when all is said and done, you can rest peacefully, knowing that you are enclosed in a coffin to which you have added personal meaning.



"Grown-ups tell us, 'Just say no.' That's easy for them to say."



"Maybe they forgot what it's like.

"At parties, at school, kids are saying to try this or do that, and they're my friends. I mean how many times can I hear I'm a loser.

"Sure I'm scared of drugs. It's just there's so much pressure. You want to say no. But you can take a lot of heat for it."

Simple yes-no decisions aren't so simple when they involve kids and drugs.

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his friend and leader Javier Heraud, who had died in an ambush so long ago.

♦

Describe the marketplace in the little town of Quetzaltepec (north of Oaxaca in Mexico). In the morning Indians of the Mixes tribe come in from the surrounding mountains. They arrive at the market carrying their wares on their backs, in bundles, in baskets. They spread everything out on the ground in the shade of the acacias planted around the large square. A kilogram of corn costs 1.25 pesos; beans, 1.75 pesos; one hundred oranges, two pesos; one hundred avocados, three pesos. It is a silent market; nobody cries out his goods; transactions take place without words in an atmosphere characterized by the complete indifference of the buyer to the seller and the seller to the buyer. Around noon the heat sets in, the trading slows to a halt, then dies out, and everybody gathers in the dark Indian bars (*puestos de mescal*) around the marketplace. A liter of mescal costs four pesos. The business ends in the complete drunkenness of everybody who took part in the market. Afterward the drunks—men, women, and children—return to their villages running into each other, falling down in the sand or on the stones, and picking themselves up, returning home without a centavo, fuddled and destitute.

[Essay]

OUR HOUSENESS

From "Abide/Abode," by Arthur Danto, in Housing: Symbol, Structure, Site, *a collection of illustrated essays edited by Lisa Taylor and published by the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, the Smithsonian Institution's national museum of design, in New York City. Danto is a professor of philosophy at Columbia University.*

According to the biblical account, it was shame that moved Eve and Adam to cover themselves when they became conscious of their fallen condition. So clothing was, initially, less a matter of protection from sun and chill than the expression of a moral intuition in the language of garmentry. By the same criterion, one would suppose the house, as a form of covering—as, essentially, a roof—to have been the spontaneous symbol of our difference from the angels, the second mark of our deep humanity.

In drawing a house as the first, or nearly the first, thing they draw, children express an innate understanding of their condition as human. A work of art that has a house in it has *us* in it, in our basic condition as dwellers. It is our basic symbol, and all other symbols for ourselves derive from it.

Hegel saw the house as the primary artistic product of the human intellect, since its form has no direct model in nature. It differs, thus, from sculpture, which initially takes its form from that of natural objects, and especially the human body. So, as spiritual product, the house inevitably gives us an outward embodiment of our inner reality and, specifically, our rational nature.

In one sense of the word, the house is a ruling-place, as in the Houses of Parliament and the House of Representatives. And ruling families are synecdochically designated a "house," as in the House of Hanover or the House of Orange. Related to this meaning is the family of English terms that refer back to the Latin *domus*: domicile, domesticate, dominate, dominion, domain, (con)dominium, domineer; through these the house speaks to us precisely as the symbol of rulership, ownership, mastery, power.

Dwelling, in this interpretation, is having in effect conquered, having made the world one's own, and thus having the rights and privileges that honorifics referring to *domus*—Don, Doña, Dame, Madame—carry like badges. That which is in*dom*itable is literally that which we cannot bring within our house: untamable, wild, undisciplined, undomesticable. Just to have a house is to possess symbolic authority (under an older system of government, to have a voice or vote), and the house is the embodiment of our dominance.

A house, as an architectural entity, exemplifies the philosophy conveyed by the concept of the *domus*. A house has to stand (a house divided against itself must fall), and the straight line, the level surface, the right angle imply the ruler, in both senses of the term. The house communicates the proposition: I stand, I am upright, I am straight, I am rational, I *am* order. These propositions are conveyed through the vocabulary of columns and beams, which must be respectively plumb and level to "house" the thought we ascribe to them. But these same propositions have nothing to do with walls, which belong instead to the language of enclosure and connect us to the other range of meanings that belongs to the concept of the house—meanings that have little to do with domination but instead with our essential weakness, as beings in need of shelter from the wild world without.

As a word, *house* carries us back to the dark forests of Germania, in contrast with *domus*, through which order and civilization are defined in the sunlit peninsulas of the Mediterranean. In Old English, *hus* means, exactly, shelter. It is cognate with *hydan*—to hide, conceal, cover;



From a series of photographs of American folk art by Vincent Borrelli. The mural shown above was commissioned in 1899 by the Modern Woodmen of America—a "fraternal life-insurance organization" that held its meetings in this room—and was painted by a traveling artist named Ernst Hupeden, who called it The Painted Forest. *The proscenium and seascape are painted on a curtain, which Borrelli lit from behind for this 1988 photograph. Borrelli's work will be shown through April at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He lives in Syracuse, New York.*

and it expands into such modern terms as hut, huddle, and hoard, and, through its first syllable, into *hus*-band (house-bound, tied to a dwelling as a condition of survival). This is the fragile, threatened, exposed side of our self-image as dwellers: beings that need protection; a place to crawl into, if only a hole or a cave. Our walls announce our vulnerability.

The idea of the *home,* as a place where goods are stored and husbanded, is already inscribed in the house as *hus,* where rationality has the implication less of rule and order than of reasonableness, thrift, frugality, moderation. For who knows what the future may bring or what needs will have to be met? The house-as-home is the place of comfort and safety, where we can let down our defenses. It contrasts with the jungle world of savages and predators "out there." It implicitly characterizes the world as precariousness.

It is instructive, in the light of this symbol, to consider the temple as the dwelling of the god. Clearly, as *dominus,* God does not need shelter. But God must be present among us in the condition of the *domus,* and it is as *domus* that the architecture of the Lord's house impresses itself upon the community: It will be the highest structure, and its *dome* transmits absolute authority. This means that the walls must themselves aspire to an absolute nonfunctional, which is to say a non-load-bearing, role, to express the fact that God is not, like us, in *need* of housing. The Gothic cathedral, of course, in reducing wall to window, executes this imperative to perfection.

The Gothic genius lies in discovering how to make walls possess purely symbolic value, and for this purpose glass is the ideal material. It says a great deal about our increasing security in the world that glass takes up greater and greater portions of our domestic enclosures. The glass house is the final emblem of a world well ordered. What immense optimism is expressed by the glass towers of the modern city!

And yet. . . . Glass today is also a social partition that divides many dwellers from the homeless, those whose powerlessness is double. Deprived of their house as *domus,* their impotence is multiplied by their lack of a house as shelter. As dwellers without a place to dwell, the homeless are at the farthest edges of humanity. They are the mirror images of us whose meaning resides in our

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one member, Michele Smith, has been focusing primarily on those who sit in the rear seat.

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[Poem]

A DREAM OF PEACE

By Andrew Motion. From the January 4 Times Literary Supplement, *published in London. Motion's new collection of poems,* Love in a Life, *will be published this month by Faber & Faber. He lives in London, where he is currently at work on a biography of Philip Larkin.*

It starts like this
with stick or stone
or sharpened bone

and a hill in the wilds
where a crotchety oak
soughs over a cave

and the face of fire
flares all day
all night all day

and *clink-clinkety-clink*
might be the hammer
of something new

or might be a bird
buried deep in the oak
which sings its heart out

with nothing to say
except what occurs
to strike home next.

It starts like that and it comes to this:
my father's tank—*clank-clankety-clank*—
just one of hundreds, sprigged with leaves,
on a rippling road through northern France,

and flouncing blossom on apple trees,
and singing larks like dots in the sun,
and easy climbs and the summer wind,
and the . . .

In a twinkling the sun is ducking behind a barn then bobbing out again. A moment ago he would have sworn everything looked like home—like Essex! But when he turns off the road into a field it is not like Essex at all. On the banks of a stream is a soldier's fair-haired head with no jaw to it—no mouth. This is all he can find.

"I wanted a big language for the people who died—
I wanted a big language for fighting. I found one,
but only when peace descended; then I looked back
and the apple-roads, my vanished brothers-in-arms,
the ruined flickering outskirts of the capital,
a dead dog in a pram, the enormous iron station
with its roof blown off, the herded people all
were part of my big language.
I filled my lungs
and shouted until I had ripped the leaves off every tree in sight
and raised a creamy wave on even the smallest buried lakes.
My language had conquered the world. I was free to say what I wanted."

When I was a boy at the head of the stairs
my life was the life of the senses.
I cooled my face on a window above the yard

and saw in the melting distance a second boy
who could have been just like me but was not,
flapping his arms like someone about to take off

if he could only get free of the tangling grass
and the dull weight of his shoes, and the geese
he was driving ahead in a brilliant scattering cloud.

The grass, the wet, the melting light, the geese.
It was panicky, but it had something to do with peace.

What should I die for?
Answer me that.
What should I live for?
Clickety-clack.

Give me an answer.
Clickety-clack.
Show me a war
then take it back.

I fell in love with a soldier
eighty years younger than me,
who knew the country best
as soon as he left it to die.

Under a beech tree in Essex
he practiced how it would go,
squeezing a gun barrel into his mouth
and then deciding no.

But I knew nothing of that:
I only saw a soldier
hearing how death would be
in the dry crack of branches

echoing endlessly.

I knew nothing, or less than nothing.
I knew books.
I knew:
"Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!"

and learned it,
saying it slowly:
"Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!"
The wrong war, the wrong speed, the wrong
accent.

Nobody noticed.
In the fuggy classroom
sunlight went solid with dust.
Quick! Quick!
Slow. Slow.
My tongue turned heavily over
and sank in the deepest sleep.
I knew nothing, or less than nothing.
The wrong war, the wrong speed, the wrong
accent.

Yes I fell in love with a soldier
eighty years younger than me,
and after I had him by heart
I went to discover his grave.
This was not being brave.

Like teeth, like paper, like flakes of ice
white stones are littered around a wood.
Quick! Quick! It will soon be dark
and I won't be able to read their names
or come here again.

His voice ran by like a wave on a buried lake,
so quiet I had to hold my breath.
There it was then! A whisper and gone—
a secret I wanted to have as my own
if I ever got home.

What language to speak
in a world apart?
How to describe
peace in a heart?

My tongue woke up
but could not speak;
I opened my mouth:
clink-clinkety-clink.

They kept on jumping up, their happiness like a trampoline, and set to at once. Chunks came away, rare as moonrock, or fragments spiky with thick brown wire, or a whole door-shaped section smeared over with writing. You couldn't read what it said, no sentence came away complete, so what they carried off were gasps and groans. We slumped in our chairs watching, my father and I, and I wanted to know: did he recognize any of this? He shook his head while I imagined the ruined flickering outskirts, the enormous iron station with its roof blown off. "It must make you wonder . . . ?" "Yup," was all he would say, "Yup; yup," and kept on looking away.

Change the channel.

With our sons between us
asleep and dreaming
the news flares up
in a blaring waste.

Press the button.

Now here is a soldier
who stands in the desert
and shouts a language
I do not know.

Change the channel.

Oh, but I see:
it's "Gas! Gas! Gas!"
rattled so fast
it means nothing to me.

Press the button.

Now here is a tank
overtaken by camels—
it makes no sense.
Clank-clankety-clank.

Change the channel.

Oh, but I see:
the camels are leaving
the world where no one
expects to survive.

Press the button.

Now here is the nothing
we see in the dark
when pictures stop
and voices die.

Change the channel.

Oh, but I see:
it's not nothing at all—
two faces are there
in the creaking drizzle,

faint and silent
while risen between them
the child wakes up
and cries to be fed.

Press the button.

There's nothing special in this good-bye at my father's house:
too much to drink, too much to eat, too many rooms too warm.

and the talk slowing down to traffic and the best and worst way home
in a language not exactly dead but not exactly loving.

So let the music start. Then comes the spurt of tires on gravel.
My father turns back to his house like someone walking underwater. ■

SHE WANTS HER TV! HE WANTS HIS BOOK!

"What I see as dangerous here," he said, "is the discontinuity of emotion that television promotes, its unnatural evocation, every five minutes, of different and incompatible emotions."

"You leave a restaurant," she said, "and get killed by a falling air conditioner. A tornado hits a picnic. There is no sense to reality. Television is actually closer to reality than anything in books. The madness of TV is the madness of human life."

So went the conversation between two cultural critics, Neil Postman and Camille Paglia, taking up an argument that has vexed nearly everyone in this century—the struggle for preeminence between words and pictures, today between books and television. This conflict is uniquely American—a debate so dense with prejudices that it has turned almost all of us into liars: "I don't watch TV" is now so common a dissembling among those who read that it has become a kind of mantra. And "I read that book" is a euphemism acceptable among recent generations to mean simply that one has heard of the title.

Neil Postman is one of the most original writers in defense of the book. A professor of communication arts at New York University and the author of Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business, Postman is a scholar, raised in the pretelevision world, whose eloquence owes much to the classical declarative prose of Strunk and White. He argues that reading is an ordered process requiring us to sit at a table, consume ideas from left to right, and make judgments of truth and falsehood. By its nature, reading teaches us to reason. Television, with its random, unconnected images, works against this linear tradition and breaks the habits of logic and thinking. Postman has said that the two most dangerous words in this century are "Now . . . this"—that strange verbal doodad uttered by television anchors to ease the transition from a report on a natural disaster to a commercial about your need—desperate need, in fact—for an electric toothbrush.

Those who argue from the other side usually make a weak and unconvincing case. With the possible exception of Marshall McLuhan, anyone writing about television has done so with apologies. Recently, a new critic has emerged named Camille Paglia. She is a professor of humanities at the Philadelphia College of the Arts and is currently finishing a critical history of culture that ranges from the cave paintings of Altamira to the Rolling Stones concert at Altamont. Volume One, entitled Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson, was recently nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award. Paglia was born after World War II, an accident to which she ascribes great significance. To hear her talk is to confirm her theory about the influence of the modern media: She speaks in a rush of images, juxtapositions, and verbal jump cuts. She argues that instead of criticizing television, most academics and other cultural critics simply turn up their noses dismissively at its enormous power—a kind of intellectual denial. Television, Paglia says, is the culture. And,

she asks, by what and whose criteria is the latest Madonna any less meaningful an icon than the last? To those who argue that kids who watch television can't recall any of the facts mentioned on it, she wonders whether we have ever watched television. Perhaps we are doing something else when we stare at the screen; perhaps the remembrance of facts has nothing to do with television's significance or effect.

Since no two thinkers have in recent time made such compelling cases, Harper's Magazine *decided to introduce them. We sent each author a copy of the other's book and asked each to read it. One cold winter night in December, we asked them to dine in the private Tasting Room of New York City's Le Bernardin restaurant—a small, glass room located inside the kitchen of Chef Gilbert Le Coze. Throughout the conversation Bruno Jourdaine served a* menu dégustation *beginning with seviche of black bass and poured glasses of St. Veran Trenel (1988). We began the dinner with a blessing in the form of two readings from the Bible.*

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."
—Exodus 20:4

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
—John 1:1

CAMILLE PAGLIA: But John got it all wrong. "In the beginning was nature." That's the first sentence of my book. Nature—violent, chaotic, unpredictable, uncontrollable—predates and stands in opposition to the ordered, structured world created by the word, by the law, by the book-centered culture of Judeo-Christianity. The image—which is pagan and expressive of nature's sex and violence—was outlawed by Moses in favor of the word. That's where our troubles began.

Remember that when the Ten Commandments were handed down on Mount Sinai, Moses had just led the Jews out of Egypt. They had followed Joseph down there several hundred years before and had become resident workers, then slaves. Over time, Judaism had gotten a little mixed up with the local Egyptian cults—a syncretism not unlike Santería in the Caribbean, with its blend of voodoo and Catholicism. When Moses tried to get his people to leave Egypt, there was resistance: "What are we *doing?* Moses, you're crazy. What homeland are you talking about?" The Ten Commandments were an attempt to clarify what is Hebrew, what is Jewish.

The Second Commandment implies that the Hebrew God has no shape, that He is pure spirit. Egyptian gods often appeared in animal form. The pagan cults of Egypt, Babylon, and Canaan worshiped such idols—for example, the Golden Calf. So Moses is saying, "We do not worship the gods of nature but a God who is above nature, a God who *created* nature. The ultimate God."

And the prohibition against graven images didn't forbid just pagan idols. It banned *all* visual imagery, of anything on earth or in the heavens. Moses knew that once a people begin to make images of any kind, they fall in love with them and worship them. Historically, the Second Commandment diverted Jewish creative energy away from the visual arts and into literature, philosophy, and law.

NEIL POSTMAN: It is curious that of the first three, so-called establishing commandments, two of them concern communications: the prohibitions against making graven images and taking the Lord's name in vain. Yet this makes sense if you think about the problems of constructing an ethical system 3,000 years ago. It was critical to tell the members of the tribe how to symbolize their experience. That is why Moses chose writing—using a phonetic alphabet, which the Jews no doubt borrowed from the Egyptians—to conceptualize this nonvisual, nonmaterial God. Writing is the perfect medium because, unlike pictures or an oral tradition, the written word is a symbol system *of* a symbol system, twice removed from reality and perfect for describing a God who is also far removed from reality: a nonphysical, abstracted divinity. Moses smartly chose the right communications strategy. With the Second Commandment, Moses was the first person who ever said, more or less, "Don't watch TV; go do your homework."

Most important, the written word allows for the development of a God who is, above all things, *mobile.* To invent a God who exists only in the word and through the word is to make a God that can be taken anyplace. Just as writing is portable speech, Moses' God is a portable God, which is fitting for a people setting forth on a long journey.

PAGLIA: That is why Jewish culture is one of the founts of Western tradition and why Western culture is so intellectually developed. Jewish thought is highly analytical, as is Greco-Roman philosophy. Both are very Apollonian. But the Greco-Roman tradition is also one of pagan idolatry. Early Christianity, which first proselytized among the poor, outcast, and unlearned, needed to use visual imagery, which became more and more pronounced in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. Out of this came the renegade priest Martin Luther, who correctly diagnosed a lapse from authentic early Christianity in medieval Catholicism. Catholics are never told to read the Bible. Instead, they have to listen to the priest commenting on excerpts from the Bible, usually just the New Testament.

POSTMAN: Luther called the invention of the printing press the "supremist act of grace by which the Gospel can be driven forward." And it was. As a result of Luther's Reformation, the intellectual geography of Europe flipped. Until then Venice, in the south of Europe, was the leading printing center and one of the world's intellectual capitals. Then the Catholic Church got nervous about it, because of the possibilities of further heresy, and began to restrict the printing press. And then, within a year of each other, Galileo died and Newton was born. The intellectual power of Europe moved from the south to the north. England, Scandinavia, Germany became the realm of the word, and the south returned to spectacle. Catholicism resorted increasingly to ornament and beautiful music and painting. To this day we think of Spain, Italy, and southern France as centers of great visual arts, from the Escorial to the Sistine Chapel. The north, home of the austere Protestant, concentrated on the word, until it found its greatest fulfillment here in the first political system built on the word alone: no divine right of kings, no mysticism, just a few pages of written text, the American Constitution.

PAGLIA: The polarity in Europe got more and more rigid. In the north, book, book, book; but in the Counter-Reformation of southern Europe, unbelievably lurid images—like Bernini's St. Teresa having a spiritual orgasm. My first childhood memories are of images, fantastic images, created by the Catholic Church. The statues are polychromatic, garish. In my church stood a statue of St. Sebastian, nude, arrows piercing his flesh, red blood dripping down. Who can wonder where *my* mind came from? Here were spectacular pagan images standing right next to the altar. In the beginning, you see, were sex and violence.

Early Christianity was very masculine. Just two male gods and a neuter—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But the popular imagination couldn't tolerate that, so in the Middle Ages it added the Virgin Mary. Go reread the Bible and see how small a role Mary plays in the Gospels. Almost none. She is a survivor of the great goddess cults of antiquity. I interpret the most essential elements of Italian Catholicism as pagan. Martin Luther saw the latent paganism of the Catholic Church and rebelled against it. The latest atavistic discoverer of the pagan heart of Catholicism is Madonna. This is what she's up to. She doesn't completely understand it herself. When she goes on *Nightline* and makes speeches about celebrating the body, as if she's some sort of Woodstock hippie, she's way off. She needs *me* to tell her. But this is what she's doing—revealing the eroticism and sadomasochism, the pagan ritualism and idolatry in Italian Catholicism.

Protestantism today continues to be based on the word and the book. That's why Protestant ministers in church or on television always stress the Bible. They shout, "*This* is all you need." And they wave it, they flap it, they even slam it around. The Protestant needs no priest, no hierarchy. There is nothing between you and God. Protestants want a close and chatty relationship with Jesus: "Have you accepted Christ as your *personal* Savior?" And they sing, "He walks with you and He talks with you." For Protestants, Jesus is a friend, the Good Shepherd.

The Italian Catholic Jesus can't speak. He's either preliterate—a baby in the arms of Mary—or comatose—a tortured man on a cross. The period when Christ is literate, when he can speak, is edited out of southern Catholicism.

. . . baked sea urchin . . .

POSTMAN: It helps to understand your point if we remember what happens every time Moses leaves. He comes back and the whole tribe has lapsed into idol worship. He is always complaining to Aaron, "What the hell did you do while I was gone?" The image is so seductive. Catholics are known for keeping little images on the dashboard of their cars, and nowadays you find them among Jews as well. Many reform temples now have more and more interesting visual designs. The Second Commandment held for a long time. Jews weren't known for their achievements in the visual arts until this century.

This proves my point about the life of the word and the image: Humans are not biologically programmed to be literate. In John Locke's essay on education, he insists that the body must become a slave to the mind. One of my students, upon hearing that quotation, said, "I

know just what he means." And she told me how she can only read lying on her side while holding the book against the wall and, as a result, only reads the right-hand page of any book. This is the challenge of literacy: to get children accustomed to sitting still, to abiding in a realm that is unnaturally *silent*. That is the world of the word. How can silence compete with television?

PAGLIA: But, Neil, people who are naturally disposed to reading may not be as physically active as others. There is an important difference here. I teach dancers. They are sometimes poor readers or even dyslexic. But they are brilliant at other, older forms of feeling and expression. Some people are inclined to the sedentary life that reading requires, others are not. That is why the entire discourse on sex and gender in academe and in the media is so off, because teachers and writers are not nearly as athletic or rambunctious as others.

POSTMAN: The literate person does pay a price for literacy. It may be that readers become less physically active and not as sensitive to movement, to dance, and to other symbolic modes. That's probably true. It's a Faustian bargain. Literacy gives us an analytic, delayed response in perceiving the world, which is good for pursuits such as science or engineering. But we do lose some part of the cerebral development of the senses, the sensorium.

PAGLIA: And some people have more developed sensoriums than others. I've found that most people born before World War II are turned off by the modern media. They can't understand how we who were born after the war can read a book and watch TV at the same time. But we *can*. When I wrote my book, I had earphones on, blasting rock music or Puccini and Brahms. The soap operas—with the sound turned down—flickered on my TV. I'd be talking on the phone at the same time. Baby boomers have a multilayered, multitrack ability to deal with the world. I often use the metaphor of a large restaurant stove to describe the way the mind works. There are many burners, and only one of them is the logical, analytical burner. And, Neil, I think we agree that our contemporary education system neglects it.

One reason American academic feminism is so mediocre is that these women can't think their way out of a wet paper bag. They have absolutely no training in logic, philosophy, or intellectual history, so they're reduced to arguing that we should throw out Plato and Aristotle because they're dead white males, or some such nonsense. That's so dopey and ignorant. People born before World War II can't understand those of us raised in the fragmented, imagistic world of TV. We can shut off one part of the brain and activate another. Scientists, psychologists, and IQ testers haven't caught up with these new ways of perception.

POSTMAN: Camille, I think we actually agree on the evidence. Only you think it is all just fine and will be a liberating development. Television and the other visual media will enlarge the sensorium and give people a fuller repertoire of means of expression. Marshall McLuhan used to refer to people like me and others as POBs: Print-Oriented Bastards—literates who had their right hemispheres amputated or atrophied. You should adopt the term, Camille; your analysis is absolutely correct. Only I tend to see this development as ominous.

Bertrand Russell used to utter a lovely phrase. He said that the purpose of education was to teach each of us to defend ourselves against the "seductions of eloquence." In the realm of the word, we learn the specific techniques used to resist these seductions: logic, rhetoric, and literary criticism. What worries me is that we have not yet figured out how to build defenses against the seductions of imagery. The Nazi regime was only the most recent example of seducing, through words and images, one of the most *literate* populations on earth. I remember Hitler's rantings. Now, I won't ask you how old you are.

"WITH THE COMMANDMENT FORBIDDING GRAVEN IMAGES MOSES BECAME THE FIRST TO SAY, 'DON'T WATCH TV; DO YOUR HOMEWORK.'"



PAGLIA: I'm forty-three. I was born in 1947. And you graduated from college in 1953. I checked! I wanted to know, because I think this information is absolutely critical to how one views the mass media. I graduated from college in 1968. There are only fifteen years between us, but it's a critical fifteen years, an unbridgeable chasm in American culture.

. . . shrimp and basil beignets . . .

POSTMAN: Well, I remember the imagery of the 1940s, when an entire political machine was pressed into the service of imagistic propaganda. In America it is somewhat different. There *is* a machine producing such images, but it is cap-

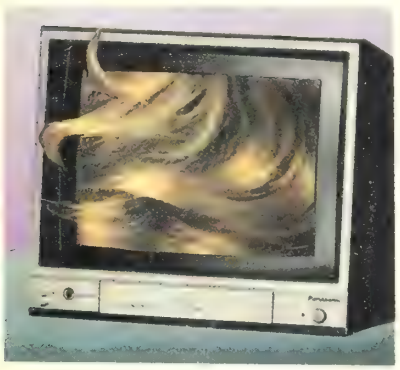
Illustrations by Victoria Kann

italism, and the output is the commercial. The process is the same. Have you seen the commercial for Hebrew National frankfurters? It shows Uncle Sam while a narrator declares how good and healthy frankfurters are because Uncle Sam maintains such high standards. Then Uncle Sam looks up as the narrator adds that Hebrew Nationals are even better than other frankfurters because they must answer to a higher authority.

PAGLIA: I love that ad! It's wonderful. Hilarious.

POSTMAN: Here is what bothers me. Symbols *are* infinitely repeatable, but they are not inexhaustible. If you use God to sell frankfurters, or if you use the face of George Washington to sell discount car tires, you drain the symbol of the very meanings, Camille, that you so astutely discover and explicate in your book. You look at a painting and analyze its levels of meaning, its ambiguities, its richness. But what happens if people see the same image a thousand times, and always to sell tight jeans?

"PRINT-ORIENTED PEOPLE JUDGED *CHARLIE'S ANGELS* BY THE MEASURES OF LITERATURE, BUT IT WAS A SHOW ENTIRELY ABOUT *HAIR*."



PAGLIA: I would argue exactly the opposite. In the Hebrew National ads the invocation of Uncle Sam and God reinforces their symbolic meaning and helps young people have a historical perspective on their own culture.

Ads shaped the imagination of my generation. The Hebrew National image of Jehovah—that he's invisible, a voice inspiring his children to high standards—is faithful to tradition. It's a fabulous ad. And, by the way, it's true—kosher franks *are* better! I believed this ad and bought the franks! I love ads as an art form. To me, there is no degradation in this particular ad at all.

POSTMAN: Perhaps you're not taking it seriously enough, Camille. By age twenty, the average American has seen 800,000 television advertisements, about 800 a week. I am not talking about radio, print, or any other kind of advertisement. I am referring only to television advertisements. Television commercials are now the most powerful source of socialization, and the schools ought to take them seriously.

Some advertisements are good, of course. I don't think Madonna would serve too well. But I think of Jimmy Stewart selling soup. In that advertisement, the producers used his voice only because that voice is sufficient to symbolize what he stands for—the embodiment of the thoroughly decent American. So the use of that imagery is fine. But in the Hebrew National advertisement, a sense of the sacred is being eliminated, or exploited by redirecting it to the profane world.

PAGLIA: If Jehovah had never expressed Himself about table manners, I would support you. But the Bible shows that Jehovah instructed the Jews at great length about what foods to eat and how to prepare and serve them.

POSTMAN: And, of course, Jehovah also forbade shellfish—everything we're eating tonight!

PAGLIA: This is the point. Kosher ritual preparation is dictated by the Bible. Nothing in the Hebrew National ad distorts or lies about Jewish tradition.

POSTMAN: Suppose you saw a commercial that showed Jesus looking at a bottle of Gallo wine and saying, "When I turned the water into wine in Cana, it wasn't nearly as good as this Gallo Pinot Noir." What does that do to the meaning of Jesus Christ for Christians? You seem very enthusiastic about the use of these images, but I think the *secularization* of these symbols and religious icons is dangerous.

PAGLIA: To you, coming from the Judeo-Christian tradition, this looks secular. If you look at it from my perspective, popular culture is an eruption of paganism—which is also a sacred style. In your book, you skip from 1920 to television. I think you leap over a critical period—the great studio era of Hollywood movies in the 1930s and 1940s. Cinema then was a pagan cult full of gods and goddesses, glamour and charisma. It was a style devoted to the sacred and the numinous. So it's not that the sacred has been lost or is being trivialized. We are steeped in idolatry. The sacred is everywhere. I don't see any secularism. We've returned to the age of polytheism. It's a rebirth of the pagan gods.

What I argue in my book is that Judeo-Christianity never defeated paganism but rather drove it underground, from which it constantly erupts in all kinds of ways. Ancient Greco-Roman culture harnessed the dynamic duality of the Apollonian and the Dionysian principles. We've inherited the Apollonian element of the Greco-Roman tradition. The history of Western civilization has been a constant struggle between these two impulses, an unending tennis match between cold Apollonian categorization and Dionysian lust and chaos.

That's why you can always tell whether a critic was born before or after World War II by the way he or she speaks of the twentieth century. To you who grew up knowing life as narrative exposition and who saw the end of an era with Fitzgerald and Hemingway—and you're right, there was a great shift, and the novel is now dead as a doornail—it's the Age of Anxiety. But the death of the novel was also the beginning of movies. I date the modern age from the first sound pictures in 1928. I call the twentieth century the Age of Hollywood.

There's a huge generational difference here. For those of us born after the war, our minds were formed by TV. Take Susan Sontag, born in 1933. There are fourteen years between her and me. It doesn't seem like much, but it's like an abyss between us. In the 1960s she was writing briefly about popular culture, but then she backed off and has spent the rest of her life saying, "I'm serious, I'm serious. Gotta find that ultimate Eastern European writer!" A few years ago, she boasted in *Time* that she had no TV and had to rent one when a guest came to visit. My TV is constantly fluttering. It's a hearth fire in the modern home. TV is not something you *watch*; it is simply on, all the time.

. . . *seared scallops in truffle vinaigrette* . . .

POSTMAN: If you keep this up, Camille, I'm going to need either more wine or a cigarette. Do you mind if I smoke?

PAGLIA: Not at all. Neil, in your book you mentioned tests in which people didn't remember any facts from a news program they had watched thirty minutes earlier on TV. But they weren't testing the right part of the brain. Watching TV has nothing to do with thought or analysis. It's a passive but highly efficient process of storing information to be used later. The proper analogy is to interstate driving or football. You know, baseball was *the* sport of the pre–World War II era. Academics love it. It's the ultimate academic sport—linear, logical, slow. Football, especially as *remade* for TV with slow motion and replays, is the sport of my generation. There's a lot of writing about baseball but hardly any good stuff about football. When a quarterback pulls back from the line and quickly checks out the field, he's not thinking, he's *scanning*, the very thing we do when we watch TV. It's like the airline pilot sweeping his eyes across his bank of instruments or the driver cruising down the interstate at high speed, always scanning the field, looking for the drunk, the hot rod, the police, or the slow old lady in the Cadillac—watch out for *her*. None of these people—the quarterback, the pilot, the driver—is *thinking*. They're only reading the field and working by instinct, deciding in an instant where to throw the ball or steer the jet or car. The decision is made by intuition, not by ratiocination.

POSTMAN: It's called pattern recognition.

PAGLIA: Oh, really? Perfect! And that's why you can't picture Susan Sontag driving a car. You know what I mean? Can you imagine Susan Sontag behind the wheel? Forget it. It's like a *New Yorker* cartoon: *Susan Sontag buys her first car!*

POSTMAN: Of course, I agree: Reading a book and "reading" television are two completely different cerebral activities. I can remember hearing print-oriented people complain that the problem with a show like *Charlie's Angels* is that it didn't honor the Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action. Or that it didn't have any *true* character development.

PAGLIA: You liked *Charlie's Angels*?

POSTMAN: As a matter of fact, I did, but I am bringing it up as an example of how people misread television. Print-oriented people can't understand such a show because they try to judge it by the measures of literature. I came to understand *Charlie's Angels* when I realized that the entire show was about *hair*.

Do you remember that at the end of the show there was a two-minute segment in which the disembodied voice of Charlie explained to the angels *what the entire show had been about*. I imagine that the show was written by a bunch of former English majors. And I see them confounded by the fact that they have just written a show that is basically about hair and doesn't fit any of the categories that they have been taught count. So at the end, they shoehorn in a vestigial narrative. Once I saw an episode in which, in order to explain everything, the voice at the end had to mention characters and action that hadn't even been *in* the program: "She killed him because years ago he had stolen money and given it to a third person . . . " Those sixty seconds before the credits—when the show was actually already over—were meant to give a show about hair a sense of logic or coherence.

PAGLIA: *TV Guide* once said about the actresses on *Knots Landing*—my favorite prime-time show—that "they act with their hair." I love it! Soap operas also are mainly about hair, you know. Very pagan—the worship of beauty. And do you realize that the Farrah Fawcett hairdo of *Charlie's Angels* can still be seen today in every shopping mall in America? Though that show has been off the air for ten years, it has this incredible ongoing influence. Farrah herself has moved on to battered-wife roles, but her old

Seventies hairstyle is still the dominant look for boy-crazy girls in American high schools. Awesome, really.

POSTMAN: We agree on the influence of popular culture as expressed through visual images. Everyone has a right to defend his or her own culture, and I feel sure there will be a cost to the kind of culture I value. It may be that your sensorium has been enlivened while mine has atrophied. But let's look at my tradition and see what it has accomplished. Consider that in 1776 Thomas Paine sold, by the most conservative estimates, 300,000 copies of *Common Sense*. That is the equivalent of selling 30,000,000 copies—a feat attainable only today by Danielle Steel or Tom Wolfe. Camille, do you think we will pay a price for this more fully developed sensorium?

PAGLIA: In your book you say that there was a high literacy rate during the American Revolution. But does that mean people actually *read* books? Political and literary books? Or was it that they could just sign their names? Your portrait of the highly literate nineteenth century also sort of ignores the trashy sentimental novels, ladies' fashion magazines, and the dime western. I agree with you that our country was founded as an Enlightenment experiment. The framers of the American Constitution were true intellectuals. But I think your book puts undue stress on that period, which was, as I see it, a kind of privileged moment. Comparing our period with that one—when there was a high degree of cultural awareness and political activity—makes us think we're slipping into a decline. But maybe we're just returning to the norm. I think the world as it is now is the way it always was.

. . . black bass in coriander nage . . .

POSTMAN: I'm not certain it was only a privileged moment, although you are right in suggesting that a high literacy rate creates a somewhat abstracted view of the world. Our culture paid a price for literacy, and it will pay a price for its tranformation into a visual culture. We are, for example, rapidly losing any sense of sacrality. The reason the Ayatollah Khomeini struck most Americans as either a complete riddle or a lunatic is that he was actually a *truly religious person*. And we can no longer understand what such a person is like.

PAGLIA: Exactly. Whenever Qaddafi would spend days in his tent, the Western media would sneer and ridicule him. I couldn't believe it. Does no one understand the ethical meaning of the desert in Bedouin culture? It's like our Walden Pond. Hasn't the media ever seen *Lawrence of Arabia*? There are two lessons in the Salman Rushdie case. First, artistic freedom is a value only in the democratic Western tradition. Second, to millions of people in the world, religion is a matter of life and death.

POSTMAN: Camille, I think these observations support my argument that what I call the secularization of imagery depletes religious symbolism: not only the frequency of the image but also the ignominious tie between the image and commercialization. That is why we in the West can't understand why someone would risk his life in an attempt to kill Salman Rushdie. To us, it's crazy. To the martyr, it is the path to heaven.

PAGLIA: Rather than your total secularization, I see the repaganization of Western culture. In the realm of politics, I think pop culture—the vehicle of the pagan eruption—plays a crucial role. Popular culture has the function of purging politics of many of its potential demagogues. Elvis Presley, an enormously charismatic figure, was able to build his empire in the politically neutral realm of pop culture.

POSTMAN: Are you saying that Hitler might have been a Hollywood star in America?

PAGLIA: Today, you have other ways for extraordinarily charismatic people to create their worlds. There are other ways to rule the universe. Before popular culture, the only realm that allowed that kind of power of personality was politics.

POSTMAN: I see the confluence between television and politics a little differently. The first television president was, obviously, John Kennedy. But the first *image* president was Ronald Reagan. They were very different figures. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, even Mario Cuomo are very much identified with regions of the country. They were and are developed personalities that play well on television. But Reagan and even Bush are different. Remember how no one knows what state Bush is from and how Reagan's being from California seemed irrelevant. These are personalities onto whom a full spectrum of voters are able to project their personal image of a president. Whatever a president is supposed to be, then that is what Reagan or Bush is.

PAGLIA: As a television persona, Reagan was avuncular and nostalgic—a return to the happy, innocent, pre–World War II era of baseball, before the chaos and disasters of the Sixties. He was simple, kindly, even-tempered, sometimes goofy. He got into his pajamas right after dinner. He ate jelly beans. He called his wife "Mommy." He never aged. His hair never got

gray. To liberal writers and academics, these things seemed stupid and ludicrous. They were off reading his policy papers, missing the whole point of his popularity. Our president is both the political and the symbolic head of our government, serving in jobs that in England, for example, are separately represented by the prime minister and the queen. The president symbolizes the nation in psychodramatic form.

POSTMAN: A nation as heterogeneous as ours gropes to find comprehensive symbols and icons to pull us together. Ronald Reagan was such an image. Every Christmas you hear people say, "Happy Holidays." We try to be so polite and inclusive. We are a fragile polity desperate for unifying images. But, paradoxically, we can destroy ourselves by exhausting the available icons.

PAGLIA: Another such image is the national weather map, which is shown, naturally, on TV. Here's this patchwork country of Chinese and Chicanos and African-Americans and Jews and Italians, and then there's this map with beautifully sweeping curved lines of air pressure stretching from sea to shining sea, pulling us together. The weatherman and the president are our two titular heads.

These images and their meaning become obvious once you know how to read TV. One more example. Remember, during the 1988 election, how everyone was calling George Bush a wimp? And he *was* a wimp, constantly trotting after Reagan and in his shadow. What a ninny, I would think; he'll never win the election. Then came the day when Ronald Reagan made his last visit to the Republican convention, and Bush named Dan Quayle as his running partner for vice president. It was the most stunning moment of TV transformation I've ever seen, but no one in the media picked it up. After Reagan left, remember the outdoor scene when Bush named Quayle? The press hysterically rushed off to report the story of how silly, stupid, and rich Quayle was. But the story was not that George had picked a jerk. The story was that George Bush, emerging as a new man, had picked a *son*. Bush had made a complete *rite de passage* on television and for television. Remember how Quayle was jumping around, acting like a puppy—even grabbing Bush by the shoulder? Later that day at the indoor press conference, Bush was amazingly stern and confident. He cut reporters off, he was completely in charge. He was this totally new person, a man no one had seen before. It was then I knew he was going to be president. I called people up and told them, but no one believed me. If you didn't know how to read TV or weren't watching, you missed it completely.

POSTMAN: And my point, Camille, which you are overlooking, is that Roger Ailes engineered that entire effect. We were all manipulated into having just that very perception.

PAGLIA: What I am talking about is nothing that Roger Ailes could have created. It was a side of Bush that predated Roger Ailes. We all have many personas, and we can pick and choose which to make public. But we cannot create them. Roger Ailes could not have saved Michael Dukakis.

. . . roast monkfish on savoy cabbage . . .

POSTMAN: Granted. If you read Bush's résumé, it is one of the most macho documents of recent times—first baseman at Yale, youngest Navy pilot, shot down in combat, head of the CIA. But when Ailes saw him acting like a ninny on television—and television does have a way of showing the authentic soul—I agree, he went to work on the indecisive wimp and promoted the image of the macho guy so that you and others would pick it up. And then that image was repeated and repeated, washing away any memory of a past impression.

"POP CULTURE PURGES POLITICS OF DEMAGOGUES: A CHARISMATIC FIGURE SUCH AS ELVIS COULD BUILD HIS EMPIRE IN THE POP REALM."



PAGLIA: In your book you speak of television as being a medium of flashing images with only an eternal present and no past. I disagree. It's just the opposite. TV is a genre of reruns, a formulaic return to what we already know. Everything is familiar. Ads and old programs are constantly recycled. It's like mythology, like the Homeric epics, the oral tradition, in which the listener hears passages, formulae, and epithets repeated over and over again. There is a joy in repetition, as children know when they say, "Mommy, tell me that story again." TV is a medium that makes us feel "at home."

If you go back to the Fifties, when movies lost their cultural centrality to TV, you'll see that the great sacred images—the huge, cold images of cinema—were being miniaturized, familiarized, and domesticated by the television screen. The box became part of the family, and the shows reflected it: *Father Knows Best* and *Leave It to Beaver*. Ads are the same way. I grew up on

Jose Ignacio Weber Lopez de Nicolalde, Ecuador

"I'D BE AN expert ON THIS BY NOW if I didn't have to take SO MANY naps."

SARAH BAGWELL, AGE 4, *Cardome Center, Georgetown, Kentucky*

NO, SARAH'S NOT MASTERING a new video game. It's a computer.

What's a four year old doing in the same room as a computer, you ask?

"Why not? It's long overdue," replies Debbie Highsmith, director of the new early childhood development program at the Georgetown Cardome community center. "At first glance, we look like your everyday day care center. But what our kids do here between naps is quite remarkable."

Pre-schoolers here are taught a second language: Spanish. And when they're not playing



in the sandbox (still the most popular activity) they can be found in the computer room.

"By the time these children go to school they will be well prepared and ready to learn. They'll know their colors, numbers and the alphabet. It gives them a tremendous advantage," says Debbie.

Giving every youngster a running



start in life is the dream of Debbie Highsmith and her dedicated staff of 25.

And although it's still in its infancy, the program is already regarded by experts as a model for the nation.

Toyota is proud to have donated the $1.3 million



Georgetown needed to start this important community and childcare center.

Naturally, we're happy that the children of so many of our employees are benefitting from this superb day care.

But we are even more excited by the long-term value of Debbie's vision to the country as a whole.

How great will the impact of this project be? We're not sure.

Although we hope that some day Sarah and her trusty computer will be able to give us the answer.

TOYOTA

INVESTING IN THE INDIVIDUAL

my favorite ads in my book—Luciana Avedon crooning, "Camay has coconut-enriched lather." I adored that ad! Of course, ads you hate are like torture. You want to die. So TV is about repetition and compulsion. It's like prayer, like the Catholic Rosary, repeated over and over again. That's what ads are: soothing litanies that make us feel safe and familiar and at home in the strange modern world.

POSTMAN: So idolatry has triumphed. I think Luther would join Moses in saying that the cult of the word is defenseless in the face of the image.

PAGLIA: Moses got his people out of Egypt, out of the land of the pagan image. That was the only way. Judaism could not have flourished in Egypt. Today, either you live in a cabin in northern Canada or you try to control TV. And I believe we *should* try to control it, by the way. Liberals are wrong when they say, "Parents should just turn off the TV set." You can't. TV is everywhere. It's bigger than politics. It's bigger than the Church.

"JESUS WAS A BRILLIANT JEWISH STAND-UP COMEDIAN, A PHENOMENAL IMPROVISOR. HIS PARABLES ARE GREAT ONE-LINERS."



POSTMAN: This is where education comes in, Camille. I believe that educational theory should be what I call "ecological"; that is, education should supply what the rest of the culture is not supplying. In this case, I think the only defense against the seductions of imagery is a literate education. If children are educated in the traditions of the word, then perhaps they will be able to make discriminating choices in the chaotic realm of the image.

PAGLIA: To me the ideal education should be rigorous and word-based—logocentric. The student must learn the logical, hierarchical system. Then TV culture allows the other part of the mind to move freely around the outside of that system. This is like the talent you need for internal medicine. An internist has to be intuitive. He knows there are about a half dozen different systems in the body, all interrelated. His mind has to weave in and out and around them and more or less guess what's wrong. This is the mental flexibility that a word-based education and a TV-based culture can develop. All parents should read to their children, from infancy on. Education is, by definition, repressive. So if you're going to repress, then repress like hell. I don't believe in the Dewey or Montessori methods—"We want to make this pleasant." There is nothing pleasant about learning to read or to think. The teachers used to shake me and yell at me to stay in line or sit still in my seat. I didn't like it, but I recommend it.

POSTMAN: In *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster wrote that if you say the king died and the queen died, you don't have a story. But if you say that the king died *because* the queen died, you have a story. I find that television undermines these simple word-based connections. The whole idea of language is to provide a world of intellectual and emotional continuity and predictability. But many of my students no longer understand, for example, the principle of contradiction. I was talking to one student the other day about a paper in which he asserted one thing to be true in the first paragraph and the exact opposite to be true three paragraphs later. He said, "What's the problem?"

This habit derives from television, which tells you that there was a rape in New York and then it tells you there was an earthquake in Chile and then it tells you that the Mets beat the Cardinals.

PAGLIA: Well, Neil, that's life.

POSTMAN: That's insanity.

PAGLIA: Not to me. In your book you say TV is Dadaist in its random, nihilistic compilation of unrelated events. I say it's surrealist—because *life* is surreal! You leave a restaurant and get killed by a falling air conditioner. A tornado hits a picnic. There's no sense to reality. It simply happens. Television is actually closer to reality than anything in books. The madness of TV is the madness of human life.

POSTMAN: Here is what I would like: When our young student is watching Dan Rather say that 5,000 people died in an earthquake in Chile and then Dan says, "We'll be right back after this word from United Airlines," I would like our student to say, "Hey, wait a second, how could he ask me to make such an emotional switch?"

PAGLIA: My answer is this: Buddha smiles. He sees the wheel of reincarnation and accepts the disasters of the universe. That's the way it should be. There's no way we can possibly extend our compassion to 5,000 dead people. By juxtaposing such jarring images, TV is creating a picture of the world that is simply true to life. We are forced to contemplate death the way farmers do—as just another banal occurrence, no big deal. Nature can crack the earth open and swallow thousands, and then the sun shines and the

birds sing. It's like going from an airplane crash to a hemorrhoids ad. In TV, as in nature, all have equal weight.

. . . carousel of caramel desserts

POSTMAN: What I am focusing on is our emotional response to those things. We all know that nurses who work in hospitals make jokes. They see the absurdity of death routinely. But they don't see anywhere near the number of deaths the television viewer sees. What I see as dangerous here is a discontinuity of emotion that television promotes, its unnatural evocation, every five minutes, of different and incompatible emotions.

PAGLIA: By moving from disaster to commercial, TV creates the effect of Greek tragedy: emotion, then detachment; contemplation of loss, then philosophical perspective. At the end of *Hamlet,* there are four corpses strewn all over the stage.

POSTMAN: But no one is laughing—although I will admit that in the graveyard scene, when Hamlet makes the "Alas, poor Yorick" speech, he *is* laughing. But my point is, just after Horatio's final soliloquy, at least on television, we would then see the Hebrew National spot, or perhaps a commercial for Danish pastry.

PAGLIA: To make that radical switch from disaster to detachment is, I think, a maturing process. If you fully responded emotionally to every disaster you saw, you'd be a mess. In fact, you'd be a perpetual child, a psychological cripple. Wisdom by definition is philosophical detachment from life's disasters.

POSTMAN: Injecting humor into otherwise insane catastrophes is comic relief. It is what we must do unless we want to go mad. But the effect I am talking about on the television news is different.

PAGLIA: I know that you see "amusement" as a bad thing wherever it shows up. You said in your book that teaching has finally been reduced to a branch of popular entertainment and that students won't sit still for anything that's not as funny as Big Bird on *Sesame Street.* And you cite Plato, Cicero, and Locke as educational philosophers who would insist on seriousness. I respectfully disagree. Plato's dialogues, which follow the Socratic method, a conversational give-and-take such as we're having here, are in fact very entertaining. There's a lot of comedy in Plato. Socrates is always pretending to be the most ignorant person there, and so on.

I think Jesus was a brilliant Jewish stand-up comedian, a phenomenal improvisor. His parables are great one-liners. When an enemy, trying to trap him, asks him about paying taxes, Jesus says, "Show me the coin of the tribute. Whose image is on it?" [illegible] replies, "Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." I think that line [illegible] and laughs.

POSTMAN: You studied with Harold Bloom [illegible] long.

PAGLIA: Bloom used to say, "Teaching's a branch of show biz!" One last point—there are the koans, the teachings of the great Buddhist masters. They often took the form of slapstick. The novice comes in and says, "Tell me about life, master," and the elder whacks him on the head. Or says something surreal, like "Beanstalk!" So we do have many examples of teaching by great sages using humor or stand-up improv—Plato, Jesus, Buddha.

POSTMAN: No one is saying not to use humor in the classroom. I guess we are talking about magnitude. It is one thing to use humor to reveal an idea you are developing. But now it is used simply to win the student's attention. Consequently, drawing an audience—rather than teaching—becomes the focus of education, and that is what television does. School is the one institution in the culture that should present a different worldview: a different way of knowing, of evaluating, of assessing. What worries me is that if school becomes so overwhelmed by entertainment's metaphors and metaphysics, then it becomes not content-centered but attention-centered, like television, chasing "ratings" or class attendance. If school becomes that way, then the game may be lost, because school is using the same approach, epistemologically, as television. Instead of being something different from television, it is reduced to being just another *kind* of television.

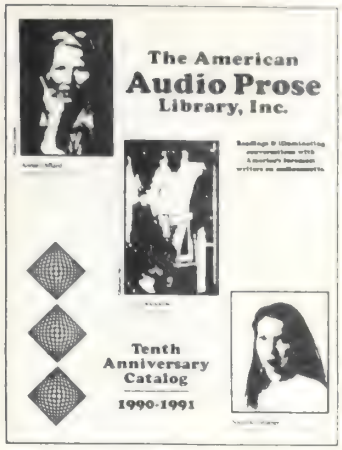
PAGLIA: Our dialogue has reached one major point of agreement. I want schools to stress the highest intellectual values and ideals of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions. Nowadays, "logocentric" is a dirty word. It comes from France, where deconstruction is necessary to break the stranglehold of centuries of Descartes and Pascal. The French *have* something to deconstruct. But to apply Lacan, Derrida, and Foucault to American culture is absolutely idiotic. We are born into an imagistic and pagan culture ruled by TV. We don't need any more French crap from ditsy Parisian intellectuals and their American sycophants. [illegible] we agree on this: We need to reinforce [illegible] centric and Apollonian side of our cu[illegible] schools. It is time for enlightened [illegible] of the children. ■


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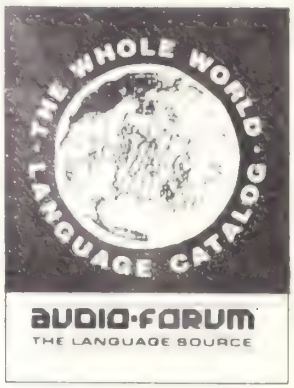
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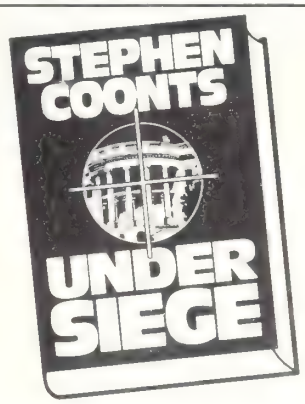
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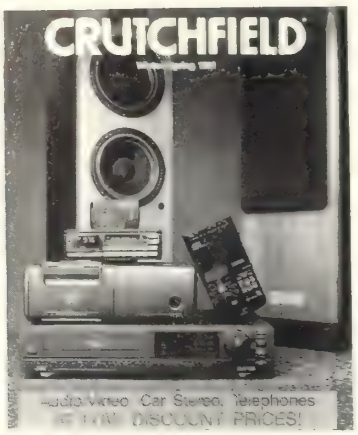
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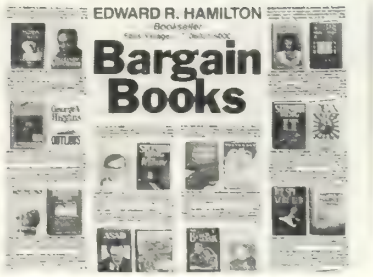
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HOPES RISE

By T. Coraghessan Boyle

I took my aching back to my brother-in-law, the doctor, and he examined me, ran some X rays, and then sat me down in his office. Gazing out the window on the early manifestations of spring—inchoate buds crowning the trees, pussy willows at the edge of the marsh, the solitary robin probing the stiff yellow grass—I felt luxurious and philosophical. So what if my back felt as if it had been injected with a mixture of battery acid and Louisiana hot sauce? There was life out there, exfoliative and rich, a whole planet seething with possibility. It was spring, time to wake up and dance to the music of life.

My brother-in-law had finished fiddling with his unfashionable beard and pushing his reading glasses up and down the bridge of his nose. He cleared his throat. "Listen, Peter," he said in his mellifluous healing tones. "We've known each other a long time, haven't we?"

A hundred corny jokes flew to my lips, but I just smiled and nodded.

"We're close, right?"

I reminded him that he was married to my sister and had fathered my niece and nephew.

"Well, all right," he said. "Now that that's been established, I think I can reveal to you the first suppressed axiom of the medical cabal."

I leaned forward, a fierce pain gripping the base of my spine like a dog shaking a rat in its teeth. Out on the lawn, the robin beat its shabby wings and was sucked away on the breeze.

My brother-in-law held the moment, and then, enunciating with elaborate care, he said, "Any injury you sustain up to the age of twenty-one, give or take a year, is better the next day; after twenty-one, any injury you sustain will haunt you to the grave."

I gave a hoot of laughter that made the imaginary dog dig his claws in, and then, wincing with the pain, I said, "And what's the second?"

He was grinning at me, showing off the white, even, orthodontically assisted marvel of his teeth. "Second what?"

"Axiom. Of the medical cabal."

He waved his hand. It was nothing. "Oh, that," he said, pushing at his glasses. "Well, that's not suppressed really, not anymore. I mean, medical men of the past have told their wives, children, brother-in-laws—or is it brothers-in-law? Anyway, it's 'Get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids.'"

This time my laugh was truncated, cut off like the drop of a guillotine. "And my back?"

"Get plenty of rest," he said, "and drink plenty of fluids."

The pain was there, dulling a bit as the dog relaxed its grip, but there all the same. "Can we get serious a minute?"

But he wouldn't allow it. He never got serious. If he got serious he'd have to admit that half the world was crippled, arthritic, suffering from dysplasia and osteoporosis, he'd have to admit that there were dwarfs and freaks and glandular monsters, not to mention the legions of bandy-legged children starving in the streets even as we spoke. If he got serious he'd have to acknowledge his yawning impotence in the face of the rot and chaos that were engulfing the world. He got up and led me to the door with a brother-in-lawly touch at the elbow.

I stood at the open door, the waiting room gaping behind me. I was astonished: He wasn't going to do anything. Not a thing. "But—" I stammered, "aren't you going to give me some pills at least?"

He held his flawless grin—not so much as a quiver of his bearded lip—and I had to love him for it: His back didn't hurt; his knees were fine. "Peter," he said, his voice rich with playful admonition, "there's no magic pill—you should know that."

I didn't know it. I wanted codeine, morphine, heroin, I wanted the pain to go away. "Physician," I hooted, "heal thyself!" And I swung around on my heels, surfeited with repartee, and nearly ran down a tiny wizened woman suspended like a spider in a gleaming web of aluminum struts and wheels and ratchets.

"You still seeing Adrian?" he called as I dodged toward the outer door. My coat—a jab of pain; my scarf—a forearm shiver. Then the gloves, the door, the wind, the naked cheat of spring. "Because I was thinking we could do some doubles at my place"—thunderous crash of door, voice

T. Coraghessan Boyle is the author, most recently, of the novel East Is East *(Viking)*

pinched with distance and the interposition of a plane of impermeable oak—"Saturday, maybe?"

At home, easing into my chair with a heating pad, I pushed the playback button on my answering machine. Adrian's voice leapt out at me, breathless, wound up, shot through with existential angst and the low-threshold hum of day-to-day worry. "The frogs are disappearing. All over the world. Frogs. Can you believe it?" There was a pause. "They say they're like the canary in the coal mine—it's the first warning, the first sign. The apocalypse is here, it's now, we're doomed. Call me."

Adrian and I had been seeing each other steadily for eleven years. We shopped together, went to movies, concerts, museums, had dinner three or four nights a week, and talked for hours on the phone. In the early years, consumed by passion, we often spent the night together, but now, as our relationship had matured, we'd come increasingly to respect each other's space. There'd been talk of marriage, too, in the early years—talk for the most part generated by parents, relatives, and friends tied to mortgages and diaper services—but we felt we didn't want to rush into anything, especially in a world hurtling toward ecological, fiscal, and microbial disaster. The concept was still on hold.

I dialed her number and got her machine. I waited through three choruses of "Onward, Christian Soldiers"—her joke of the week—before I could leave my message, which was, basically, "I called; call me." I was trying to think of a witty tag line when she picked up the phone. "Peter?"

"No, it's Liberace risen from the dead."

"Did you hear about the frogs?"

"I heard about the frogs. Did you hear about my back?"

"What did Jerry say?"

"Get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids."

She was laughing on the other end of the line, a gurgle and snort that sounded like the expiring gasps of an emphysemic horse, a laugh that was all her own. Two days earlier I'd been carrying a box of old college books down to the basement when I tore everything there is to tear in the human back and began to wonder how much longer I'd need to hold on to my pristine copy of *Agrarian Corsica, 800 B.C. to the Present*. "I guess it must not be so bad then," she said, and the snorting and chuffing rose a notch and then fell off abruptly.

I considered that a moment, disappearing frogs, especially as they related to my throbbing and ruined back. I pictured them—squat, long of leg, with extruded eyes and slick mucus covered skin. I remembered stalking them as a boy with my laxly strung bow and blunt arrows, recalled the sound of the spring peepers and their clumsy attempts at escape, their limbs bound up in ropy strings of eggs. Frogs. Suddenly I was nostalgic: What kind of world would it be without them?

"I hope you're not busy this weekend," Adrian said.



"Not so bad for you," I said, "—or for Jerry. I'm the one who can't even bend down to tie his shoes."

"I'll get you a pair of loafers."

"You spoil me. You really do. Can you find them in frogskin?"

There was a silence on the other end of the line. "It's not funny," she said. "Frogs, toads, and salamanders are vital to the food chain—and no jokes about frogs' legs, please—and no one knows what's happening to them. They're just disappearing. Poof."

"Busy?" My tone was guarded; a pulse of warning stabbed at my spine through its thin tegument of muscle fiber and skin. "Why?"

"I've already reserved the tickets."

The sound of my breathing rattled in my ear. I wasn't about to ask. I took a stoic breath and held it, awaiting the denouement.

"We're going to a conference at N.Y.U.—the Sixth Annual International Herpetology and Batrachiology Conference . . ."

I shouldn't have asked, but I did.

Illustrations by Karen Barbour

"The what?"

"Snakes and frogs," she said.

On Saturday morning we took the train into Manhattan. I brought along a book to thumb through on the way down—a tattered ancient tome called *The Frog Book,* which I'd found wedged in the corner of one of the denuded shelves of the Frog and Toad Section at the local library. I wondered at all that empty space on the shelves and what it portended for the species and genera involved. Apparently Adrian wasn't the only one concerned with their headlong rush into extinction—either that or the sixth grade had been assigned a report on amphibians. I wasn't convinced, but I checked the book out anyway.



My back had eased up a bit—there was a low tightness and an upper constriction, but nothing like the knifing pain I'd been subjected to a few days earlier. As a precautionary measure, I'd brought along a Naugahyde pillow to cushion my abused vertebrae against the jolts and lurches of the commuter train. Adrian slouched beside me, long legs askew, head bent in concentration over *Mansfield Park,* which she was rereading, by her own calculation, for the twenty-third time. She taught a course in the novels of Jane Austen at Bard, and I never really understood how she could tolerate reading the same books over and over again, semester after semester, year after year. It was like a prison sentence.

"Is that really your twenty-third time?"

She looked up. Her eyes were bright with the nuances of an extinguished world. "Twenty-fourth."

"I thought you said twenty-third."

"Reread. The first time doesn't count as a reread—that's your original read. Like your birthday—you live a year before you're one."

Her logic was irrefutable. I gazed out on the vast gray reaches of the frogless Hudson and turned to my own book: *The explosive note of the Green Frog proceeds from the shallow water; the purring trill of "the Tree Toad" comes from some spot impossible to locate. But listen! The toad's lullaby note comes from the far margin, sweeter than all the others if we except the two notes in the chickadee's spring call. We could never have believed it to be the voice of a toad if we had not seen and heard it on that first May Day.* I read about the love life of toads until we plunged into the darkness at 97th Street, and then gave my eyes a rest. In the early days, Adrian and I would have traded witticisms and cutting portraits of our fellow passengers all the way down, but now we didn't need to talk, not really. We were beyond talk.

It might have been one of those golden, delicately lit spring mornings invested with all the warmth and urgency of the season—bees hovering, buds unfolding, the air soft and triumphant—but it wasn't. We took a cab down Park Avenue in a driving wintery rain and shivered our way up two flights of steps into a drafty lecture hall where a balding man in a turtleneck sweater was holding forth on the molting habits of the giant Sumatran toad. I was feeling lighthearted—frogs and toads: I could hold this one over her head for a month, two maybe—and I poked Adrian in the ribs at regular intervals over the course of the next two stultifyingly dull hours. We heard a monograph on the diet and anatomy of *Discoglossus nigriventer,* the Israeli painted frog, and another on the chemical composition of the toxin secreted by the poison arrow frog of Costa Rica, but nothing on their chances of surviving in the next decade. Adrian pulled her green beret down over her eyebrows. I caught her stifling a yawn. After a while, my eyes began to grow heavy.

There was a dry little spatter of applause as the poison arrow man stepped down from the podium, and it aroused me from a morass of murky dreams. I rose and clapped feebly. I was just leaning into Adrian with the words "dim sum" on my lips, words that were certain to provoke her into action—it was past one, after all, and we hadn't eaten—when a wild-looking character in blond dreadlocks and tinted glasses took hold of the microphone. "Greetings," he said, his hoarse timbreless voice rustling through the speakers and an odd smile drifting across his lips. He was wearing a rumpled raincoat over a T-shirt that featured an enormous crouching toad in the act of flicking an insect into its mouth. The program identified him as B. Reid, of UC Berkeley. For a long moment he merely stood there, poised over the microphone, holding us with the blank gaze of his blue-tinted lenses. Someone coughed. The room was so still I could hear the distant hiss of the rain.

"We've been privileged to hear some provocative and stimulating papers here this morning," B. Reid began, and he hadn't moved a muscle, save for his lips, "papers that have focused brilliantly on the minute and painstaking research crucial to our science and our way of knowledge, and I want to thank professors Abercrombie and Wouzatslav for a job well done, but at the same time I want to ask you this: Will there be a Seventh International Herpetology and Batrachiology Conference? Will there be an eighth? Will there be a discipline, will there be batrachiologists? Ladies and gentlemen, why play out a charade here—will there be frogs?"

A murmur went up. The woman beside me, huge and amphibious-looking herself, shifted uneasily in her seat. My lower back announced itself with a distant buzz of pain and I felt the hackles rise on the back of my neck: This was what we'd come for.

"Cameroon," B. Reid was saying, his voice rasping like dead leaves, "Ecuador, Borneo, the Andes, and the Alps: Everywhere you look the frogs and toads are disappearing, extinction like a plague, the planet a poorer and shabbier place. And what is it, what have we done? Acid rain? The ozone layer? Some poison we haven't yet named? Ladies and gentlemen," he rasped, "it's the frogs today and tomorrow the biologists . . . before we know it the malls will stand empty, the freeways deserted, the creeks and ponds and marshes forever silent. We're committing suicide!" he cried, and he gave his dreadlocks a Medusan swirl so that they beat like snakes round his head. "We're doomed, can't you see that?"

The audience sat riveted in their

seats. No one breathed a word. I didn't dare look at Adrian.

His voice dropped again. "*Bufo canorus,*" he said, and the name was like a prayer, a valediction, an obituary. "You all know my study in Yosemite. Six years I put into it, six years of crouching in the mud and breathing marsh gas and fighting leeches and ticks and all the rest of it, and what did it get me? What did it get the Yosemite toad? Extinction, that's what. They're gone. Wiped from the face of the earth." He paused as if to gather his strength. "And what of Richard Wassersug's albino leopard frogs in Nova Scotia? White tadpoles. Exclusively. What kind of mutation is that?" His voice clawed its way through the speakers, harsh with passion and the clangorous knelling of doom. "I'll tell you what kind: a fatal one. A year later they were gone."

My face was hot. Suddenly my back felt as if it were crawling with fire ants, seared by molten rain, drawn tight in a burning lariat. I looked at Adrian and her eyes were wild, panicky, a field of white in a thin net of veins. We'd come on a lark, and now here was the naked truth of our own mortality staring us in the face. I wanted to cry out for the frogs, the toads, the salamanders, for my own disconnected and rootless self.

But it wasn't over yet. B. Reid contorted his features and threw back his head, and then he plunged a hand into the deep pockets of his coat; in the next instant his clenched fist shot into the air. I caught a glimpse of something dark and leathery, a strip of jerky, tissue with the life drained from it. "The Costa Rican golden toad," he cried in his wild burnished declamatory tones, "R.I.P.!"

The woman beside me gasped. A cry went up from the back of the room. There was a shriek of chairs as people leapt to their feet.

B. Reid dug into his breast pocket and brandished another corpse. "*Atelopus zeteki,* the Peruvian variegated toad, R.I.P.!"

Cries of woe and lamentation.

"*Rana marinus,* R.I.P.! The Gambian reed frog, R.I.P.!"

B. Reid held the lifeless things up before him as if he were exorcising demons. His voice sank to nothing. Slowly, painfully, he shook his head so that the coils of his hair drew a shroud over his face. "Don't bother making the trip to Costa Rica, to Peru, or Gambia," he said finally, the shouts rising and dying round him. "These"—and his voice broke—"these are the last of them."

The following day was my sister's birthday, and I'd invited her, Jerry, and the children to my place for dinner, though I didn't feel much like going through with it after B. Reid's presentation. The lecture hall had echoed like a chamber of doom with the dying rasp of his voice, and I couldn't get it out of my head. Stunned silent, our deepest fears made concrete in those grisly pennants of frog flesh, Adrian and I had left as soon as he stepped down from the podium, fighting our way through the press of stricken scientists and heartsick toad lovers and out into the rain. The world smelled of petroleum, acid, sulfur; the trees were bent and crippled, and the streets teemed with ugly and oblivious humanity. We took a cab directly to Grand Central. Neither of us had the stomach for lunch after what we'd been through, and we sat in silence all the way back, Adrian clutching Jane Austen to her breast and I turning *The Frog Book* over and over again in my hands. Each bump and rattle of the Hudson line drove a burning stake into the small of my back.

The next morning I debated calling Charlene and telling her I was sick, but I felt guilty about it: Why ruin my sister's birthday simply because the entire planet was going to hell in a handbasket? When Adrian showed up at ten with three bags of groceries and acting as if nothing had happened, I took two aspirin, cinched an apron around my waist, and began pulverizing garbanzo beans.



All in all, it was a pleasant afternoon. The rain drove down outside and we built a fire in the dining room and left the door to the kitchen open while we cooked. Adrian found some chamber music on the radio and we shared a bottle of wine while she kneaded dough for the pita bread and I folded tahini into the garbanzo mush, sliced tomatoes, and chopped onions. We chatted about little things—Frank Sinatra's hair, whether puree was preferable to whole stewed tomatoes, our friends' divorces, lint in the wash—steering clear of the fateful issue burning in both of our minds. It was very nice. Tranquil. Domestic. The wine conspired with the aspirin and after a while the knot in my back began to loosen.

Jerry, Charlene, and the kids were early, and I served the hummus and pita bread while Adrian braised chunks of goat in a big black cast-iron pan she'd brought with her from her apartment. We were on our second drink and Jay and Nayeli, my nephew and niece, were out on the porch catching the icy rainwater as it drooled from the eaves, when Adrian threw herself down in the chair opposite Jerry and informed him in a clarion voice that the frogs were dying out.

The statement seemed to take him by surprise. He and Charlene had been giving me a seriocomic history of their yacht, which had thus far cost them something like $16,000 per hour at sea and which had been rammed, by Jerry, into a much bigger yacht on its maiden voyage out of the marina. Now they both paused to stare at Adrian. Jerry began to formulate a smile. "What did you say?"

Adrian smelled of goat and garlic. She was lanky and wide-eyed, with long beautifully articulated feet and limbs that belonged on a statue. She drew herself up at the edge of the chair and tried out a tentative smile. "Frogs," she said. "And toads. Something is killing them off all over the world, Alaska to Africa. We went to a conference yesterday. Peter and I."

"Frogs?" Jerry repeated, stroking the bridge of his nose. His smile, in full efflorescence now, was something to behold. My sister, who favored my late mother around the eyes and nose, emitted a little chirp of amusement.

Adrian looked uncertain. She gave out an abbreviated version of her horsey laugh and turned to me for

encouragement.

"It's not a joke," I said. "We're talking extinction here."

"There was this man," Adrian said, the words coming in a rush, "a biologist at the conference, B. Reid—from Berkeley—and he had all these dried frogs in his pockets . . . it was horrible . . . "

I could hear the rain on the roof, cold and unseasonal. Nayeli shouted something from the porch. The fire crackled in the hearth. I could see that we weren't getting it right, that my brother-in-law, the doctor, was making a little notation of our mental state on the prescription pad of his mind. Why were we telling him all this? Was he, the perennial jokester who couldn't even salvage my lower back, about to take on loss of habitat, eternal death, and the transfiguration of life as we know it?

No, he wasn't.

"You're serious, aren't you?" he said after a moment. "You really believe in all this environmental hysteria." He let the grin fade and gave us his stern off-at-the-knee look. "Peter, Adrian," he said, drawing out the syllables in a profound and pedagogical way, "species conflict is the way of the world, has been from the beginning of time. Extinction is natural, expected: No species can hope to last forever. Even man. Conditions change"—he waved his hand and then laughed, making a joke of it. "If this weather doesn't let up I think we're in for a new Ice Age, and then where will your frogs be?"

"That's not the point," I said.

"What about the dinosaurs, Peter?" Charlene interjected. "And the woolly mammoth?"

"Not to mention snake oil and bloodletting." Jerry's smile was back. He was in control. All was right with the world. "Things move on, things advance and change—why cry over something you can't affect, a kind of fairy-tale Garden of Eden half these environmentalists never knew? Which is not to say I don't agree with you—"

"My god!" Adrian cried, springing from her seat as if she'd been hotwired. "The goat!"

Late that night, after everyone had gone home, even Adrian, though she'd gotten amorous at the door and would, I think, have spent the night but for my lack of enthusiasm, I eased into my armchair with the newspaper and tried to wipe my mind clean, a total abstersion, tabula rasa. I felt drained, desolate, a mass of meat, organ, and bone slipping inexorably toward the grave along with my distant cousins the frogs and the toads. The rain continued. A chill fell over the room and I saw that the fire had burned down. There was a twinge in my back as I shifted my buttocks to adjust the heating pad, and then I began to read. I didn't feel up to war in the Middle East, AIDS, the homeless, or the obituaries, so I stuck to the movie reviews and personal-interest stories.

It was getting late, my mind had gone gratifyingly numb, and I was just about to switch off the light and throw myself into bed, when I turned to the science section. A headline caught my eye: HOPES RISE AS NEW SPECIES MOVE INTO SLUDGE OFF COAST.

And what was this? I read on and discovered that these rising hopes were the result of the sudden appearance of tube worms, solemya clams, and bacteria in a formerly dead stretch of water in the Hudson Canyon, used from time immemorial as a repository for the city's sewage and refuse. Down there, deep in the ancient layers of sludge, beneath the lapping fishless waves, there was life, burgeoning and thriving in a new medium. What hope. What terrific and uplifting news.



Tube worms. They had to be joking.

After a while I folded up the newspaper, found my slippers, and took this great and rising hope to bed with me.

The week that followed was as grim and unrelenting as the week that gave rise to it. Work was deadening (I shifted numbers on a screen for a living, and the numbers had never seemed more meaningless), my back went through half a dozen daily cycles of searing agony and utter absence of feeling, and the weather never broke, not even for an hour. The skies were close and bruised, and the cold rain fell. I went directly home after work and didn't answer the phone at night, though I knew it was Adrian calling. All week I thought of frogs and death.

And then, on Saturday, I woke to an outpouring of light and a sudden sharp apprehension of the world that was as palpable as a taste. I sat up. My feet found the floor. Naked and trembling, I crossed the room and stood at the window, the cord to the glowing blinds caught up in my hand, the stirrings of barometric change tugging at the long muscles of my lower back. Then I pulled the cord and the light spilled into the room, and in the next moment I was shoving the blinds aside and throwing open the window.

The air was pregnant, rich, thick with the scent of renewal and the perspicacious hum of the bees. All that moping, all those fears, the named dread and the nameless void: It all evaporated in the face of the hosanna of a morning. I felt like Ebenezer Scrooge roused on Christmas Day, Lazarus reanimated, Alexander the Great heading into Thrace. I opened every window in the house, I ate a muffin, read the paper, matched the glorious J. S. Bach to the triumph of the morning. It was heady, but I couldn't sustain it. Ultimately, inevitably, like a sickness, the frogs and toads crept back into my head, and by 10:00 A.M. I was just another mortal with a bad back sinking into oblivion.

It was then, at the bottom of that trough, that I had an inspiration. The coffee was cold in the cup, the newsprint rumpled, Bach silenced by the tyranny of a mechanical arm, and suddenly a notion hit me and I was up out of the kitchen chair as if I'd been launched. The force of it carried me to the bedroom closet, where I dug around for my hiking boots, a sweatshirt, my Yankees cap, and a denim jacket, and then to the medicine cabinet, where I unearthed the tick repellant and an old aerosol can of Off! Then I dialed Adrian.

"Adrian," I gasped, "my heart, my love—"

Her voice was thick with sleep. "Is this an obscene phone call?"

"I've been gloomy lately, I know it—"

"Not to mention not answering the phone."

"I admit it, I admit it. But have you been the day out there?"

She hadn't. She was still in bed.

"What I'm thinking is this: How can we take B. Reid's word for it? How can we take anybody's?"

I didn't know where to begin looking for the elusive toad, *Bufo americanus*, let alone the spring peeper or the leopard frog, but I was seized with a desire to know them, touch them, observe their gouty limbs and clumsy rituals, partake once more of the seething life of pond, puddle, and ditch, and at least temporarily lay to rest the nagging memory of B. Reid and his diminutive corpses. It was irrational, I knew, but I felt if I could see them, just this once, and know they were occupying their humble niche in the hierarchy of being, everything would be all right.

We parked along the highway and poked desultorily through the ditch alongside it, but there was nothing animate in sight. The old cane was sharp and brittle and there was Styrofoam, glass, and aluminum everywhere. Trucks stole the air from our lungs, teenagers jeered. Adrian suggested a promising-looking puddle on the far verge of the rutted commuter lot at the Garrison station, but we found nothing there but submerged gum wrappers and potato chip bags ground into the muck by the numbing impress of steel-belted radials. "We can't give up," she said, and there was just the faintest catch of desperation in her voice. The sun was big and benevolent, gnats drifted lazily on the air, and the car threw universes of light from its chrome and safety glass. "What about the woods off the Appalachian Trail? You know, where it crosses the road down by K Mart?"

"All right," I said, and the fever was on me, "we'll give it a try."

Twenty minutes later we were in the woods, sun glazing bole and branch, tender new yellow-green leaves unfolding overhead, birds shooting up from the path as if jerked on a string. There was a smell here I'd forgotten—the dark wet odor of process, of things breaking down and springing up again, of spore and pollen and seed and mulch. Bugs hovered around my face. I was sweating. And yet I felt good, strong in back and leg, already liberated from the cloud that had hung over me all week, and as I followed Adrian up the long slow incline of the path, I thought I'd never seen such a miracle as the way the muscles of her thighs and buttocks flexed and relaxed in the grip of her jeans. This was nature.



We'd gone a mile or so when she suddenly stopped dead in the middle of the path. "What's the matter?" I said, but she waved her hand to shush me. I edged forward till I stood beside her, my pulse quickening, breath caught high in my throat. "What?" I whispered. "What is it?"

"Listen."

At first I couldn't hear it, my ears attuned to civilization, the chatter of the TV, high fidelity, the blast of the internal combustion engine, but then the woods began to speak to me. The sound was indistinct at first, but after a while it began to separate into its individual voices, the smallest rustlings and crepitations, the high-pitched disputations of the birds, the trickle of running water—and something else, something at once strange and familiar, a chirping fluid trill that rose strong and multivoiced in the near distance. Adrian turned to me and smiled.

All at once we were in a hurry, breathless, charging through the frost-burned undergrowth and sharp stinging branches, off the path and down the throat of a dark and sodden ravine. I thought nothing. B. Reid, Jerry, herniated disks, compound fractures, the soft green glow of the computer monitor: nothing. We moved together, with a fluid balletic grace, the most natural thing in the world, hunched over, darting right, then left, ducking this obstruction, vaulting the next, shoving through the tangle as easily as we might have parted the bead curtains in a Chinese restaurant. And as we drew closer, that sound, that trill, that raucous joyous paean to life swelled round us till it seemed to vibrate in our every cell and fiber. "There!" Adrian cried suddenly. "Over there!"

I saw it in that moment, a shallow little scoop of a pond caught in the web of branches. The water gave nothing back, dead black under the buttery sun, and it was choked with the refuse of the trees. I saw movement there, and the undulating chorus rang out to the treetops, every new leaf shuddering on every branch. The smell came at me then, the working odor, rank and sweet and ripe. I took Adrian's hand and we moved toward the water in a kind of trance.

We were up to our ankles, our boots soaked through, when the pond fell silent—it happened in a single stroke, on the beat, as if a conductor had dropped his baton. And then we saw that there was no surface to that pond, that it was a field of flesh, a grand and vast congress of toads. They materialized before our eyes, stumpy limbs and foreshortened bodies, clambering over one another, bobbing up like apples in a barrel. There they were—toads, toads uncountable—humping in a frenzy of webbed feet and seething snouts, humping blindly, stacked up three and four high. Their eggs were everywhere, beaded and wet with the mucus of life, and all their thousands of eyes glittered with lust. We could hear them clawing at one another, grunting, and we didn't know what to do. And then a single toad at the edge of the pond began with his thin piping trill and in an instant we were forgotten and the whole pullulating mass of them took it up and it was excruciating, beautiful, wild to the core.

Adrian looked at me and I couldn't help myself: I moved into her arms. I was beyond reason or thought, and what did it matter? She pushed away from me then, for just a moment, and stepped back, water swirling, toads thrilling, to strip off her shirt and the black lace brassiere beneath it. Holding me with her eyes, she moved back another step and dropped them there, in the wet at the edge of the pond, and eased herself down as if into a nest. I'd never seen anything like it. I shrugged out of my denim jacket, tore off my shirt, sailed the Yankees cap into oblivion. And when I came for her, the toads leapt for their lives. ■

BERLIN, FUTURE TENSE

Chilly scenes of the *fin de siècle*

By John Lukacs

On the day—the second of December, 1990—the German people, for the first time since 1933, voted in an all-German election, there was something of a Sunday stillness in Berlin; but it was not the hush of a great historic occasion. It was the sense of approaching Christmas. There were Advent candles and Advent wreaths, electric and flickering, in many apartment windows—this early—and a few twinkling trees set up outside on the balconies, the latter most probably an American-inspired custom. But everywhere the sense of inwardness prevailed over outwardness on this day. I hardly saw any people at the voting stations; yet nearly 80 percent of the people did vote. There were not many posters and billboards. In the evening, when the election results came in (amazingly soon and amazingly accurate), there was little hoopla, few of the rituals of American elections (except that at the Free Democrats' headquarters, where there played a—German—Dixieland band). The comments of the German politicians—winners as well as losers—were less rhetorical, less sentimental, than what is now customary among American candidates. All in all, this was a dignified election, something that Americans may contemplate with satisfaction.

John Lukacs's The Duel: 10 May–31 July 1940: The Eighty-Day Struggle Between Churchill and Hitler *has just been published by Ticknor & Fields.*

One of the reasons for this lack of excitement was that the result was known well in advance. The polls had been extraordinarily precise. They predicted that Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his coalition of Christian Democrats would get about 43 percent of the vote, and so they did. Sometime we ought to pay more attention to this polling business. Is it one of the incarnations of the Heisenberg discovery, that is, the act of observation affecting the behavior of the object?

Perhaps this is particularly applicable to the German people, who have an innate and powerful desire for orderliness and respectability. Hitler came to know that. In November 1923 he attempted a putsch, a rising, in Munich, knowing that in their hearts many elements of the established order shared his German nationalist sentiments; but because he marched that day against the respected barriers of order, he failed. He learned quickly. Less than ten years later he became chancellor of the Reich because large masses of otherwise conservative Germans concluded that, unlike the communists or other extremists on the Left, the National Socialists were respectable Germans after all.

I was surprised that the otherwise very reliable and accurate German newspapers got one thing wrong. They wrote that December 2, 1990, was the first free all-German election since that of November 1932, when the Nazis, despite a decline in their vote, retained their position as the largest party. No. The last all-German election had been that of March 5, 1933, a month after Hitler was named chancellor—a democratic election with one exception: The Communist Party had been ordered dissolved. In that election Hitler and the Nazis got 43.9 percent of the all-German vote, almost exactly what Kohl and his coalition got on December 2.

There is nothing really wrong with Kohl. He has not a bit of the Nazi in him. Only: He does remind me of the middle-class, Catholic, non-Nazi, Rhineland Germans who (and whose party) in March 1933 chose not to obstruct but to support Hitler, mostly because of his anticommunism but also because of his stress on a newly found German national unity and national order. I know that this is an unfair comparison. More important, a new Hitler-type mass movement is an impossibility. Hitler and the Nazis belonged to the twentieth century; and in Berlin—as throughout Europe—that century is now over.

Berlin does not belong to the Atlantic sphere but to the Continental one. This is evident in many things, including its physical climate: not much of a spring and not much of an autumn. There is a very bright north-

ern summer, like a long-legged, pale-blond young woman, with milky skin and round watery blue eyes. Berlin is a very large city in circumference, with many lakes and long summer evenings with late lights over the smooth stone terraces of the waterfront villas, the trees acid green and never sere. So there is a bit of country on the edges of this city, though its *rus in urbe* is the opposite of the English ideal of *urbs in rure*, an urbane existence amid country living.



I am inclined to think that the most characteristic—and, in many ways, the best—Berlin season is the winter. The sky is uniformly gray. But underneath that gray flannel canopy there is a crisp cold, unlike the wet windy chill of Atlantic seaboard winters; and one has the curious and agreeable impression of a city that is both modern and cozy, both upper- and lower-middle-class, both Brandenburg and European—a sprawling northern city away from the stunning wintry darkness of the estranging seas: a metropolis on the sandy and oft-bloodied Eastern plain.

I found myself looking up often and with a certain respect, perhaps even desire, at the well-lit, large-paned windows of the modern apartment houses in the Budapester Strasse, one of the few chic streets in the middle of the city, aware of their interior atmosphere: the prosperous comforts of all those *Stilmöbel*, armchairs and sofas upholstered in brown plush, with a few Biedermeier pieces here and there and one large, and usually dreadful, abstract painting on the *Salon* wall. Unlike a smart French or Swiss haut bourgeois house, these apartments do not breathe elegance; but they exhale comfort. This is a very prosperous country now, with a people whose aspirations for well-being are solid and reasonable, though their recent acquisitions of riches are often crass. (But where are they not?)

For a long time West German democracy was inseparable from West German Americanization, the evidences of which have been protean, ranging from the admirable to the comic, including the Americanization of much of the German everyday as well as the business language. But this has begun to ebb now, for more than one reason. One of them is the decline of American prestige, including the decline of the dollar, which, alas, shows every sign of not being a transitory phenomenon. It is not only that, for an American, Berlin is very expensive, with a small shot of spirits at a bar costing eight dollars and breakfast in my hotel seventeen.

Let's stop here. There is more to this than a report on currency rates and more than a materialist observation. Has it ever happened, in this century, that an American traveling abroad found that he was poorer there than were the natives of his class? Perhaps less elegant, less sophisticated, less polished, less worldly. But poorer? This is not an ephemeral phenomenon. It is replete with a meaning that has nothing—and I mean *nothing*—to do with materialism.

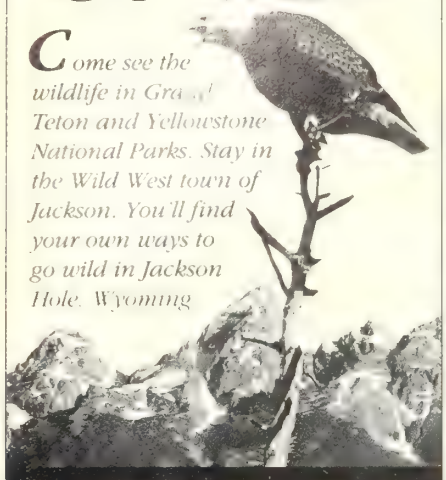
Some of this I find melancholy and even sad. One afternoon I wandered into KaDeWe (Kaufhaus des Westerns), the now traditional big department store on the Kurfürstendamm. It was all aglitter, pulsating with bright luxury, full of people and yet without a sense of jostling crowds, with knowledgeable and well-meaning staffs, handsome young women at myriad counters. I felt sad as I suddenly realized that this is how a great American department store was thirty, forty years ago.

The German people, by and large, like Americans—for which they have plenty of reasons, I must say. Their political judgment is more realistic than that of the people in Eastern Europe, whence I had flown to Berlin. Even the most intelligent people in Hungary and Poland startled me with the opinion, widely held in Budapest and Warsaw, that this world-historical change, the end of an epoch, the decline of the Soviet Union and its astonishing retreat from Europe, was due to one man: Ronald Reagan. It was Reagan who, with his brilliant armament program and his Star Wars, forced the Soviet Union into bankruptcy. Reagan made Gorbachev do what he had to do. I heard this again and again; and, after so many times stuttering "nonsense," I simply gave up. The Germans don't think this about Reagan and history. They know the Russians better than that. They know what they owe to Gorbachev, which is to their credit.

I walked one morning through the Tiergarten to the Brandenburg Gate, a good two miles from my hotel. The

Photograph by Tomas Muscionico/Contact Press Images

This Year, Go Wild.



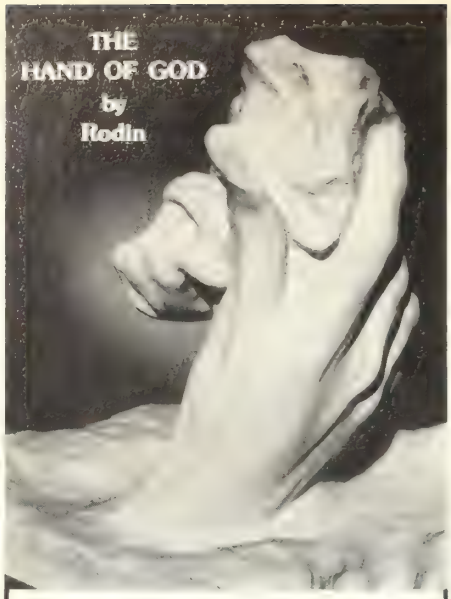
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SOLUTION TO THE FEBRUARY PUZZLE



NOTES FOR "VALENTINE"

Most of the clue answers required the addition of an O or two, forming a new word. ACROSS: 1. B-B; 4. CD, "seedy"; 7. BRAS(h); 9. FR-AY; 10. SHE'D; 14. A-IDE(a); 16. (colli)DING & Lit; 17. TATTERS, two meanings; 19. (c)OUCH; 22. (p)ALES(t); 23. L-O-B, initial letters; 26. RAN(i); 28. R(HE)A; 29. B(reakfast)-LT; 31. C-and-L(degre)E; 34. CUR(S...)E; 36. CO-HOST(anagram); 38. CHERT, anagram; 40. FRA, odd letters; 41. (mil)LION etc.; 42. (has)SLED; 43. DTS, last letters. DOWN: 1. NOB, reversed; 2. REGAN, anagram; 3. BADE, anagram; 4. LI-ATTAC(k) reversed; 5. RILES, hidden; 6. DAD(a); 8. SAL(e)-ON; 9. F(IT-T)ED; 10. SUR(e)LY; 12. STERE, anagram; 13. CA(tfi)SH; 15. G-ROVE; 16. DNA, hidden & Lit; 18. SIT-E; 20. (bu)COLIC; 21. HAYMOW, anagram; 24. B-LAST; 25. B(L)AT; 27. QU-ARTS; 31. CUFF, two meanings; 32. CELTS, hidden in reverse; 33. (bon)D-RIES(anagram); 35. SC-ROD; 37. H-OD(reversal); 39. HAL'S.

SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 98). BABETTE ROSMOND: ROBERT BENCHLEY (HIS LIFE AND GOOD TIMES). It is so much the fashion nowadays for critics to boast in print about the books they've read that it's almost staggering to readjust to somebody with genuine modesty who thought it rather bad taste to name-drop books, like so many love affairs.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 99, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by March 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the April issue. Winners of Double Acrostic No. 97 are Eleanor W. Beebe, Gloucester, Massachusetts; Iris Brooks, San Francisco, California; and Marie Bragdon, Kirkwood, Missouri.

ubiquitous grayness of Berlin—of th air, of the pavements, of the roads—light rather than dark; transparen rather than opaque; clear and not fog gy. Long before I reached the Bran denburg Gate I sensed that I wa walking eastward, away from th Atlantic.

About half a mile from the Bran denburg Gate, still on the formerl Western side, there is the Soviet Wa Memorial. The war memorial, in scribed to the heroism of the Sovie soldiers who liberated (if that is th word) Berlin, is neoclassical, in th Thirties' monument style (though built after 1945) and not unimpres sive. Impressive too was the sight o two statuesque young Russian sol diers, obviously of an elite guards regiment, in their long greatcoats and white gloves, standing motionless be fore the memorial. There is a low wire fence separating the memorial from the sidewalks. People stopped, start ed, watched, but no one said any thing, at least not while I was there.

Just ten yards or so farther along be gan the startling scene of a bazaar: the scum and froth atop the oceanic ebb ing of the great historic tide, of the actual withdrawal and the potential dissolution of the great Russian em pire that flooded into Berlin forty-five years ago. There were ten—no, twen ty, fifty, one hundred trestle tables in a disorderly row, heaped high with Soviet Army fur caps, with the red star embedded in the dark fur; officers' caps of all of the Soviet armed ser vices, spanking clean; Soviet military decorations of all kinds; binoculars; army belts; pistols. And on the pave ment, spread out on plastic sheets: Soviet Army greatcoats; uniforms of all kinds. The officers and the soldiers of the Soviet Army garrisons in East Berlin were selling their equipment for German money. Remnants from an army in dissolution. Many of the vendors I saw had Mongol, Asian faces. Some of them were soldiers in sweaters, in jeans tucked into army boots.

I was tempted to buy one of those fur hats for thirty-five marks. For a souvenir? Because it was a warm hat? Something stopped me from doing so. I looked up and followed the ragged line of the tables with their vendors

stretching straight to the Brandenburg Gate itself, then bending around it, petering out on the other side.

I have never liked the Russians, and I fled them from Hungary more than forty-four years ago. But what I was experiencing now was a sentiment of helpless sadness—as always at the sight of someone or something being humiliated.

I walked on a little in what had been East Berlin. The Unter der Linden was *their* showcase boulevard. *Pas grand-'chose*. In the side streets off the boulevard, I passed the peeling, heavy, dark Wilhelmian apartment houses, *Mietkasernen*, that somehow survived the war, sheltering all kinds of weary people during the forty-five years of communist rule. They looked as if, inside, they smelled of coal smoke and thick pea soup pot-heated in small dingy kitchens. I was cold and tired. I'd been walking for three hours. I looked for a taxi back to the luxury of my hotel in the West (or what had been the West).

One more startling sight. We drove along the eastern side of what had been the Wall. That Wall once was more than one hundred miles long; it consisted, in most places, of two parallel walls, with minefields, etc., in between. It was first breached a little more than a year ago; now *nothing* of it remains. German working habits, German elbow grease.

But now, as the cab drove along what is still (it won't be for long) Otto-Grotewohl-Strasse, another wall blocked the view to the west. It was a three-block-long row of soon-to-be-occupied apartment houses—where a year ago the no-man's-land on the eastern side of the Wall had stood. They are well-built, attractive, with large postmodern angular bay windows. They must have been built in eight or ten months, no more.

All over Berlin one was urged to "Help Russia!"—on the television screen, by posters on kiosks in the streets with information about where to send money to the funds for Russia. I read that some German war veterans sent a convoy of trucks with food and clothes for the families of Russian

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veterans. Another poster read: EIN HERZ FÜR RUSSLAND. "A heart for Russia."

I was impressed by this. I know that in so many acts of public charity there is an element of self-satisfaction, the pleasure nouveaux riches take in showing that they are in a position to give. But this is irrelevant now. As Dr. Johnson said: "Intentions must be judged from acts." The Russians conquered and brutalized Germany, and kept it divided for forty-five years. All of this is gone, gone, all over now.

It struck me again how the twentieth century was a rather short century. It really lasted only seventy-five years, from 1914 to 1989. The eighteenth century was a long one, 125 years, from 1689 to 1815—from the start to the end of the great global wars between England and France, wars fought mostly for the legacy of the bankrupt Spanish empire on both sides of the Atlantic. The early history of the United States was part and parcel of those wars, which began with the Glorious (so-called) English Revolution and ended with Napoleon's going into exile a few weeks after Waterloo. The nineteenth century lasted almost exactly one hundred years, from 1815 to 1914—from Napoleon's final defeat to the start of World War I. Much of its progress and prosperity were due less to the Industrial Revolution than to the fact that for those one hundred years there were no world wars. The twentieth century began with World War I and progressed to World War II; and, of course, both wars were largely due to the exercise of German might.

We are in a unique situation. No one knew in 1689 that the seventeenth century was ending (indeed, the word "century," in its historical sense, had then only begun to appear in the minds and vocabularies of a few people). No one knew in 1815 that global wars would not recur for another hundred years; what worried thinking people then was the prospect that the eighteenth century, with its resulting French Revolution, would somehow go on and on. *We* know, because we can see it with our very eyes, that the political order of the twentieth century has come to its end. We have emerged from the landscape made by the two world wars in which each of us, in Europe and America and especially in Berlin, have lived our entire lives. Until now.

We are in the first throes of the twenty-first century—and of something that in Europe last happened about fifteen or more centuries ago: a migration of large masses of people. This *may*—I am not saying that it *will*—bring about one of the most dramatic changes in modern European history. From Romania and Bulgaria, passing through Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria, hundreds of people arrive in Germany every day. There is serious tension along the German-Polish border only sixty miles east of Berlin; thousands of Poles move back and forth, and the traffic reports on the Berlin radio announce a wait of eight to ten hours at the border stations. Meanwhile, a westward wandering from the Soviet Union has begun. In November alone 60,000 people from the East came to Poland. If anarchy were to increase in the Soviet Union, this trickle might turn into an ungovernable stream, especially in the new year, when every Soviet citizen is to receive a passport upon request. The governments of Europe (and especially of Germany and of Berlin) are aware of this prospect. What they can do about it no one knows. What will happen if hundreds of thousands of people from the East begin to move: Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians, Russians; and behind them Kazakhs, Armenians, Tartars, even Mongols?

Fortunately, the question is still *if*, not yet *when*.

Tocqueville wrote that in the age of democracy great revolutions will become rare. Question: Will an age of migrations of peoples succeed the centuries of wars and internal revolutions?

In any event, the people of Berlin (and, perhaps, of Germany) have begun to turn their eyes to the East. I had this feeling from the moment I landed until I flew out of Berlin in the black December dawn: that to the west there was hustle and bustle, lakes, forests, hills and mountains, but that I was on the edge of the vast, sandy, Eurasian plain, stretching eastward, seemingly without end. ■

BACK TO LOVE CANAL

Recycled homes, rebuilt dreams

By Verlyn Klinkenborg

The day I came to Love Canal, the season was undecided. The postman wore walking shorts, but school had started and I could feel the Niagara Frontier tightening up for autumn, which is only a pause before winter here. I drove from Buffalo through Tonawanda and Wheatfield to the city of Niagara Falls, past the airport, past the few small farms still standing on Cayuga Drive. Around me lay suburbs and malls and, farther north, the beginnings of the fruit belt, the cherry and apple orchards that border Lake Ontario. I crossed the bridge over Bergholtz Creek and entered a quiet residential district, where children had just trailed off to school. The everyday hung over lawns and sidewalks like leaf smoke, creating a sense of protective closure, insulation against the unexpected.



A few blocks away, indiscernible, the Niagara River flowed—opaque, glacial, morbid, bound for its tumult a mile or two downstream. No one moves to Niagara Falls for the falls. It is not that kind of city and not that kind of attraction. Parts of the city sizzle and stink with industry, with refineries, power stations, chemical plants. The Power Vista, as they call it, and the hydroelectric reservoirs—clean arcs of concrete—seem to mock the casual shambles of rock that shape the falls. The city fathers still debate how plainly to mark the route to the precipice. Confusion is profitable. The falls should come as a surprise, they seem to feel.

I followed the map to Frontier Avenue in the easternmost section of the city and found a discrepancy. The map showed 97th and 99th streets running north from Frontier Avenue to Colvin Boulevard. In reality 97th and 99th streets and the houses on both sides of them, together with the cross streets of Read Avenue and Wheatfield Avenue, as well as the 99th Street School and its playground and its parking lot, were demolished in 1982 and 1983 and lie buried under many tons of sod, clay, and high-density polyethylene in what is now called the "Canal Site Containment Area." The sod, a well-kept grass field that mounds attractively in the middle, is surrounded by an eight-foot chain-link fence and pierced by vertical fluorescent-orange pipes. Beneath the field lies the Love Canal, 3,000 feet long, 80 to 100 feet wide, and 15 to 40 feet deep, where between 1942 and 1953 the Hooker Electrochemical Company dumped nearly 22,000 tons of chemical waste, much of it toxic, including, as one of the reporters who broke the story of Love Canal wrote, as much dioxin as fell upon Vietnam in the form of Agent Orange.

"Love Canal," "Hooker Chemical," "Toxic Waste Dump"—these phrases return in a lump after so much time, so much intervening history. Many persons—perhaps most persons—now think that the drama of Love Canal lay in the negligent deposit of chemicals, the unwitting exposure to those chemicals of nearby residents, the ultimate relocation of hundreds of families. They forget that Love Canal became a national story, a byword, because it radicalized

Verlyn Klinkenborg is the author of The Last Fine Time, *a work of nonfiction, published recently by Knopf. His essay "Come and Gone" appeared in the June 1990 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

apparently ordinary people. Love Canal severed the bond between citizens and their city, their state, and their country. The battle there was fought over that bond, and it was fought in public, through protest marches and press releases, because the public—not the state, was at risk.

I came upon Love Canal too suddenly. It was like stepping out of a lodgepole forest onto the site of an old burn. I wanted a transition. One minute I was savoring the taste of the ordinary, and it lulled me, as it is meant to do. Then, abruptly, almost in the instant I looked up from my map, the streets fell empty of cars, people, sound. The grass had grown long, and the hedges were untrimmed; fallen branches lay ungathered in yards, and at the curb piles of brush moldered here and there. I turned up 100th Street. Houses lined only its east side. The electric meter had been removed from every house. Sidewalks and driveways were turning to rubble. Nearly all the windows had been boarded up, and on most of the doors a number had been chalked in black, a number that was once an address but now seemed more like an inventory mark. At 723 a yellow lawn chair sat alone on a concrete porch, facing the chain-link fence and mounded field to the west. There were houses with rock-faced fronts and metal awnings, with brick and shingle facades, simple clapboard houses redone in aluminum siding, houses as plain as one ever finds in the suburbs. They were poignant only because they were deserted.

These were not the houses that lay across the street from Love Canal in the 1970s. These were the houses that lay across the street from the backyards of the houses that once lay across the street from the houses whose backyards once lined the canal. Everything west of 100th Street for a quarter mile was buried and fenced. When the buyout of homes at Love Canal was finally settled a decade ago, the state of New York found itself the owner of nearly all the property within what came to be called the EDA, the Emergency Declaration Area: a district one mile long and a half mile wide containing 789 single houses. Now, in order to recoup some of its losses and to restore the neighborhood to life, the state is offering some of those houses for sale through the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency. You can buy one of the houses LCARA has chosen to offer, or you can deposit one hundred dollars and LCARA will order an appraisal on a vacant house of your own choosing. But to settle at Love Canal, you'll have to forget how these houses came to be empty. You'll have to pretend that the past has little meaning.

Near Frontier Avenue, the houses are old and rural in character, barely salable. But a mile to the north, above Colvin Boulevard, near Bergholtz Creek, and a block or two away from the canal, the streets are in better condition and the houses are more likely to be modern in an early Sixties manner and built of brick. These are the houses LCARA has decided to sell. On 98th Street, which dead-ends at the canal, I stopped and inspected 1071, a small ranch, 1,026 square feet, with gray shingle siding and a pink door. The asking price was forty-eight thousand dollars. That included a long list of renovations yet to be done by LCARA: new driveway, new insulation, new external doors, new paint. I examined 1076, across the street—a gray ranch with a breezeway, two bedrooms, one bath, 1,144 square feet, corner lot, patio, barbecue pit, sixty thousand dollars. It had a clean, urbane fireplace notched into the end of a wall like a missing cornerstone. Behind it flows Black Creek, from whose bed dioxin-contaminated sediments were scraped a year ago as part of the Love Canal remediation plan.

On 98th Street, a telephone lineman was preparing to restore service. A block away, an LCARA maintenance man was working with a languor that looked official. A man who had seen me inspecting houses walked over and began to talk. He wore a blue work shirt and a trim gray beard and was taking the day off from painting his house because of the threat of rain. He was a longtime resident, one of the few persons who had not accepted the federal buyout. I said he must be happy to be getting neighbors again[illegible] last.

"Who needs neighbors?" he said[illegible] like it the way it is. Nice and quie[illegible]

The lineman joined the conver[illegible] tion. They talked about a mysteri[illegible] section of Love Canal buried unde[illegible] golf course in another part of tow[illegible] The reason it had never been dug u[illegible] they suggested, was best expressed [illegible] rubbing the thumb over the first t[illegible] fingers in a lucrative motion. T[illegible] conversation became a workshop [illegible] worldly wisdom, a lesson in lum[illegible] taking. They talked of people w[illegible] had lived "inside the fence" and "ou[illegible] side the fence" as if the fence arou[illegible] Love Canal had always been the[illegible] and as if having lived inside the fen[illegible] conferred a special authority whe[illegible] suffering was concerned. The ta[illegible] grew strong. Environmental activis[illegible] were in it for themselves, the goverr[illegible] ment was a patsy, the chemical indu[illegible] try had been good for the city, life w[illegible] full of risks, you took your chances.

Are the houses safe? I asked.

"I never moved," said the resident[illegible]

"What's safe?" said the lineman.

To find out I drove to 9820 Colvi[illegible] Boulevard, a ranch house typical o[illegible] the kind LCARA is selling, perfec[illegible] for a young family or a retired couple[illegible] Michael Podd, the New York Stat[illegible] Department of Environmental Con[illegible] servation's citizen-participation spe[illegible] cialist, sat at his desk in someone's[illegible] former living room. An assistant ad[illegible] ministrator sat not far away at a desk[illegible] in someone's former dining room.[illegible] Podd gave me a sheaf of official docu[illegible] ments. He took me back into some[illegible] one's former bedroom and showed me[illegible] an elaborate three-dimensional mod[illegible] el, complete with geological strata[illegible] and transparent overlays depicting[illegible] the lapse of time. He explained what[illegible] happened at Love Canal in more in[illegible] formal language than that used in the[illegible] official documents. It was a sad story,[illegible] full of good intentions gone awry but[illegible] with a great evil remedied in the end.[illegible] "I don't tell people what's safe or[illegible] not," Podd concluded. "My job is to[illegible] give them enough information so that[illegible] they can make up their own minds."[illegible] From his desk, Podd could look di[illegible] rectly across the street to the Canal[illegible] Site Containment Area, or to what[illegible] LCARA calls the "reservation," Love

anal itself, capped and fenced and monitored through groundwater ells. It was like looking at the buffer one of a minimum-security prison.

I visited the LCARA sales office. The realtor there was a good-umored, slender man named Leon rd Rinallo, seventeen years in the al estate business. He wore a mus-iche and white pants and drove a Mercury Cougar, which he parked in ie driveway of 1010 96th Street, an-ther small ranch house. Someone's rmer living room, where in 1978, 979, or 1980 someone might have atched the news coverage of the motional protests occurring a block way at Love Canal, was now Leonard inallo's office. A brightly colored Adopted Land Use Diagram" was inned to the wall. Outlined in yel-w was "Black Creek Village," the ew name for the cluster of streets orth of the Canal Site Containment rea. Future parkland was outlined in reen, planned residential develop-nent in orange. In the red areas east f the canal—areas the present health ommissioner has deemed uninhabit-ble (though several families live here)—plans are afoot for commer-ial and light industrial development. The empty houses on 100th, 101st, nd 102nd streets will eventually be lestroyed.

The interior of the LCARA sales ffice was resonantly empty. It had he midmorning feel I have always as-ociated with the homes of neat, hildless housewives, for whom the lay's work is done quickly and a va-ancy fashioned by ten o'clock. But here was no television, and there were no neighbors, and a realtor's lesk stood where a sofa might once ave been. By chance, I visited Ri-allo on the day after the state su-preme court threw out a plea brought by several environmental groups for an injunction against house sales at Love Canal. He expressed measured happiness with the decision, renewed satisfaction with his job. Rinallo would have been more cheerful had a source of mortgages been found as well. "The banks can't redline," he said, "but they can sit on an applica-tion forever." Sales were not brisk. (In the coming months, sales would improve. By early November, thir-

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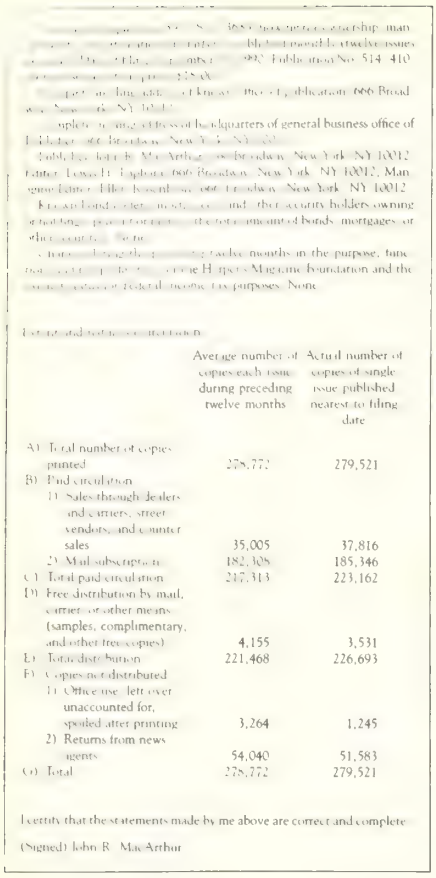
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(Signed) John R. MacArthur

March Index Sources

1 Resolution Trust Corp. (Washington); **2** American Bankers Assoc. (Washington); **3** Standard & Poor's (N.Y.C.); **4** *Investor's Daily* (Los Angeles); **5,6** NBC News–*Wall Street Journal* poll (Washington); **7** Sen. Tom Harkin (Washington); **8** U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; **9** British Information Services (N.Y.C.); **10** Deborah Amos, *Mother Jones* (San Francisco); **11** U.S. Energy Dept./U.S. Defense Dept.; **12** U.S. Army Tank Automotive Command (Warren, Mich.); **13,14** Deborah Bleviss, International Institute for Energy Conservation (Washington); **15** First Boston (N.Y.C.); **16** Drexel Burnham Lambert (N.Y.C.); **17** U.S. IRS; **18** Surfer's Medical Assoc. (San Francisco); **19** *The First Really Important Survey of American Habits,* by Mel Poretz and Barry Sinrod (Price Stern Sloane, Los Angeles); **20,21** Fleishman Hillard (N.Y.C.); **22** *Late Night with David Letterman* (N.Y.C.); **23** Gallup Organization (Lincoln, Neb.); **24,25** Indian Embassy (Washington); **26** Centre Jean Rostand (Pouydesseaux, France); **27** L.A. Office of the City Attorney; **28,29** National Safety Council (Chicago); **30** N.Y. Infirmary–Beekman Downtown Hospital Debutante Ball (N.Y.C.); **31** Kimberly Christie Burke, National Institute of Mental Health (Rockville, Md.); **32,33** Daniel Linz, University of Calif. (Santa Barbara); **34** Masters & Johnson (St. Louis, Mo.); **35** City Lites (St. Petersburg, Fla.); **36,37** Kinsey Institute (Bloomington, Ind.); **38** *National Geographic* (Washington); **39** Ilya Raskin, Rutgers University (New Brunswick, N.J.).

teen houses were under contract though still awaiting financing. A coalition of environmental groups including the National Resources Defense Council would later sue to stop the sales.)

Rinallo treated me like a customer. He gave me a state-prepared packet of information and took me back into someone's former bedroom, where he played an LCARA sales video for me. It outlined the slow but inexorable process that led from the digging of the canal by William T. Love for a turn-of-the-century model industrial city to the moment when the first new homeowner in the revitalization plan turns the key in the lock of his newly refurbished house. The video was worth watching to see pictures of Love Canal in the Thirties, when it was just a long pond. It was worth watching to hear the cheerful music and the narrator's march-of-time voice and to sense the high pitch of official optimism. (The video is currently being revised. The state attorney general's office protested the video's description of Love Canal as a suitable dumpsite for its era, a problem that Rinallo described as "a play on words type thing." The state may merely be protecting its own litigation. Its case against Occidental Petroleum, Hooker's parent company, for its role at Love Canal has just come to trial in Buffalo after a decade of legal positioning.)

I drove back to the edge of the Canal Site Containment Area and parked. I watched the neatly groomed field that lay behind the chain-link fence. It was hard to imagine that it had once been a school and a playground and two streets full of houses. It was hard to imagine the 44 million pounds of chemical waste still lying beneath it. It was especially hard to imagine those chemicals lying on the surface of the earth, suppurating, as they had in the late Seventies, and to picture those streets filled with distraught homeowners protesting their fate and the corporate and governmental negligence that had brought it on.

Many of those homeowners—bedrock, blue-collar Americans—worked in the Niagara Falls chemical industry or had friends or relatives who did. It did not surprise all of them to learn that Hooker had dumped 22,000 tons of toxic chemicals, covered the pit, and walked away, wiping its hands. They knew that a chemical plant "is not a chocolate factory," as a Hooker official in Michigan remarked in the late Seventies. What surprised them was the discovery that an attempt had been made to shift liability for those chemicals all down the line. With a warning in the final paragraph of its 1953 deed of sale—the inadequacy of which the attorney general is testing in court, though LCARA includes the same limitation of liability in its current sales contracts—Hooker sold the canal for the sum of one dollar to the Niagara Falls Board of Education, which erected a grammar school on the site. Sensing its own legal jeopardy, the Board of Education deeded part of the property in 1960, with another annulment of liability, to the city of Niagara Falls, where, if you possessed faith in government, you would suppose liability might safely rest. But the mayor of Niagara Falls, Michael O'Laughlin—still mayor in 1990 and chairman of LCARA since 1980—told protesting homeowners, "You are hurting Niagara Falls with your publicity. There is no problem here."

Prospective buyers would visit the LCARA sales office and the Department of Environmental Conservation's Public Information Office, as I had. They would collect pamphlets and brochures. Perhaps they would read them. If they did, they might get the impression that the city, state, and federal governments had willingly initiated the chemical analyses, the health studies, the temporary removal of residents, and the final buyout of homes in the Emergency Declaration Area. They might notice that in the fact sheet on "Love Canal EDA Habitability," the New York State Department of Health said, in effect, that it was up to prospective buyers to decide whether the houses there were safe, houses offered at 15 to 20 percent less than local market prices. With a bundle of encouraging official documents under one's arm and the sight in one's eye of a fenced "reservation" and a scientific-looking leach-

ate treatment plant, the plea of money would always prevail. A bargain is a bargain.

As I sat and stared at the vacancy that was once Love Canal, I found myself temporarily persuaded of, if not by, the state's rationality. But rationality is not always a virtue, and credulity is an old failing of mine, the residue of an upbringing in which deference meant a lot and reasonableness was more important than reason. No one ever called it tractability, that predisposition to reasonableness, but that is what it amounts to. At Love Canal, after visiting Michael Podd and Leonard Rinallo, I found myself eager again to believe what I was told because it was the least depressing choice. I wanted to feel again that the past had been a nice place, or, conversely, that the future would be. I knew better, though not half as well as the former inhabitants of the empty houses that surrounded me.

The question naturally arises: Who would move to Love Canal? The question is imprecise. It assumes that the answer is, No one in his right mind. (It also assumes a full awareness of what happened at Love Canal.) The state of New York, through LCARA, has gone out of its way to appeal to the right-minded. Its brochures and fact sheets bear the stamp of rationality, of solid, official information. Its realtor looks like other realtors, its houses like other houses. The streets where it does its business are as quiet as the streets in brand-new developments. The right-minded may well move to Love Canal, but they will need to believe that their predecessors were wrong when they formed a homeowners' association and insisted on a government buyout of all homes in the area. Either that, or the right-minded will need to believe that the state has fixed the problem. The past was a nice place. Or the future will be.

The potential buyers of homes at Love Canal are middle-aged. They are young. They are mostly blue-collar workers, squeezed, as everyone is, by the rise in housing costs. They resemble no one so much as they do

Continued on page 78

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Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank")

Whom does it belong to? Is it "occupied territory"?

Many even otherwise well-informed people believe that the turmoil in the Middle East is due to the Israeli "occupation" of Judea and Samaria, also known as the "West Bank"—a territory less than half the size of Los Angeles County.

What are the facts?

■ Jews have been living in all parts of "Palestine" since Biblical times. After World War I, Britain was in control of Palestine. Earlier, in 1917, it had issued the Balfour Declaration. It called for the establishment in Palestine of a "national home for the Jewish people", with the understanding that the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish community would be respected.

■ Until Jewish immigration into "Palestine" began in earnest early in this century, the country was sparsely populated and underdeveloped (Mark Twain describes the desolation well in his book *Innocents Abroad.*) Its civilization was that of the Middle Ages. When the Jews came into the country, they created commercial, agricultural, and industrial opportunities which acted as a magnet to the Arabs, most of them nomadic.

■ In 1920, the League of Nations made Britain the mandatory power in Palestine, effective in 1922. The Mandate, in line with the Balfour Declaration, provided for the establishment of a Jewish national home in all or any part of Palestine. The British, contrary to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, divided the country in two parts. They granted the area east of the Jordan River to the Hashemite tribes, thus excluding it from Jewish settlement. They limited the Jewish National Home to an area within the 23% remaining west of the Jordan River. That entire area is about half the size of San Bernardino County in California. Transjordan was given independence by Britain in 1946.

Israel declared its independence in April of 1948, on the same day as Britain relinquished its Mandate, and after the Arabs had rejected a partition plan proposed by the United Nations.

■ In its War of Independence, against overwhelming odds, the newly-formed Israel Defense Forces were able to defeat five combined Arab armies. Transjordan, however, succeeded in pushing westward across the Jordan River and in occupying Judea and Samaria. *They* were the occupiers, and they stayed in that occupation until they attacked Israel in 1967 and were defeated in the Six-Day War. During its 19 years of occupation, Transjordan, now renamed "Jordan", systematically removed all Jews from the territory. Jewish holy places were profaned and destroyed.

■ Israel has administered Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") since 1967. Approximately 90,000 Israelis have settled there. The Arab population in the area enjoys local autonomy, civil liberties, free access to higher education, and the highest standard of living of any Arab population anywhere in the countries neighboring on Israel.

■ A homeland for Arab Palestinians? Of course, they deserve one. They have such a country. It's Jordan. Jordan (77% of the British Mandate) is Arab Palestine. Never in history has there been an Arab state in Judea and Samaria, and there certainly was never any mention of it during the 19 years of Transjordanian occupation.

In the Camp David Accords, Israel committed itself to autonomy for the Arab inhabitants of the area and to the determination of a permanent political status. Israel has invited representatives of Jordan and of the Arab inhabitants of Judea–Samaria to participate in autonomy talks. But, under pressure and threats of the PLO and Arab rejectionists, they have so far refused to participate in any negotiations. Peace, and the ultimate resolution of the problem of the "West Bank" can only come about by negotiations. Israel has been ready for such negotiations for more than 20 years.

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Continued from page 75

the people who used to live there. And what do they say about the area?

"You can't beat the price. If the neighborhood does catch on, in five or six or ten years, I've got a great investment."

"I'd like a place where there's some sense of values, where you can take pride in where you live."

"They must have cleaned it up pretty well. It's probably one of the safest places to live in Niagara Falls by now. There are problems no matter where you live in the world."

"There are chemicals all over this town. My attitude is, if you find a place where they've at least paid attention to cleaning it up, you should go."

"I think it was all a lot of hooey. This street should never have been condemned to begin with. If it was contaminated, I don't think you'd be seeing so many green trees."

"Or all these squirrels."

Who would move to Love Canal?

"Everyone's waiting for someone else," said Leonard Rinallo in September. "Most people are followers."

"Former residents are coming back," he added in November, "people from the Niagara Falls area. One man sold his home in California and bought the most expensive house we had. He's moving here in the spring. Another family with three children. They wouldn't be coming if they didn't think it was safe."

Is it safe? Beneath the "reservation," the toxins in the canal have been "contained," though no one will guarantee their perpetual containment. There is no problem here, the state implies, as it has all along. "I've got an hour-and-a-half commute to work," says Michael Podd, the citizen-participation specialist. "I'd buy a house here." Podd also told me a story about one longtime Love Canal resident who said to an interviewer, "I know what's in my backyard. Do you know what's in yours?" When the validity of the state's habitability studies is challenged, LCARA's executive director, William Broderick, says, "Just about every place is contaminated. If we shouldn't put people in here, then maybe the rest of the city should be evacuated."

Life at Love Canal halted a decade ago: Its streets are still; traffic nonexistent. As I sat beside the fence around the canal, it seemed as if all the men were at work, all the wives shopping, all the children at school, all the grandparents still living in rural homes. The style of the houses dates back to the late Fifties and early Sixties, when America was a different country. The threat of toxic contamination around me was invisible, intangible, but the sense of nostalgia was extraordinarily pungent. These deserted streets evoked an era when, as one potential home-buyer remarked, Love Canal was the "kind of place where you had street parties all the time, where you really knew the people next door. It was the kind of place where if a father was taking his kids for ice cream, he'd take the whole block along."

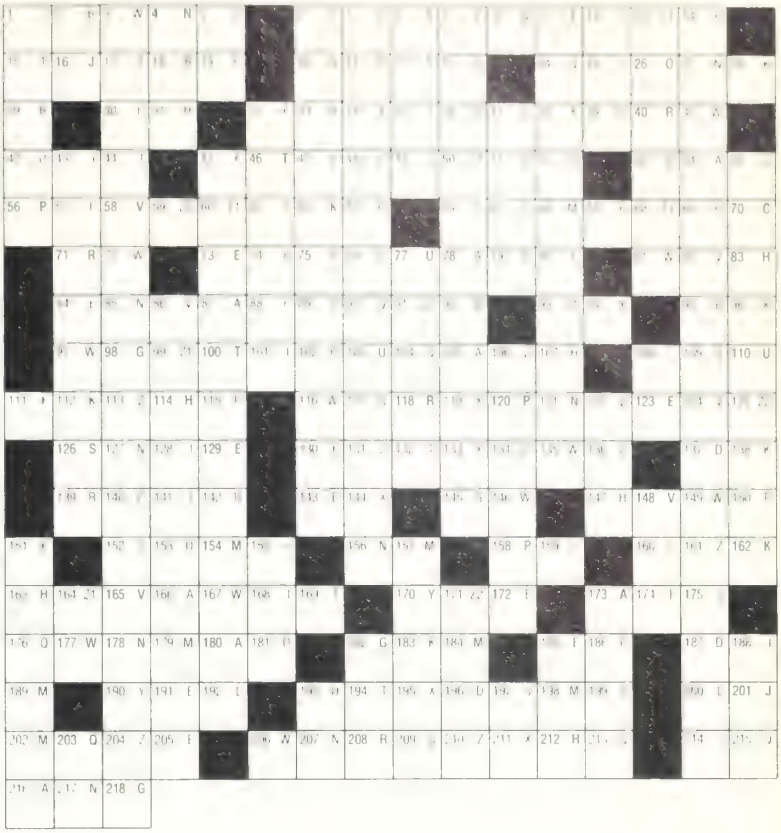
That man, a former resident, was describing a time when no one expected to be surprised by the presence of chemical waste in the backyard, a time in the minds of its people when government was generous and watchful, not obdurate and evasive, as it was when the Love Canal Homeowners' Association began to press for chemical analyses, medical testing, and, ultimately, the buyout of homes. What many prospective buyers see when they look at Love Canal, and what its first residents saw too, is a suburban innocence that harks back a generation or more, a neighborhood where the everyday creates a sense of protective closure. They are eager to believe, paradoxically, that everything has changed and that the past can be recaptured. The state would like to foster that faith. It is selling the past, and it hopes to purchase forgetfulness. In the informational packets and video that LCARA shows prospective buyers, there is no allusion to the ardor of homeowners' protests at Love Canal, no trace whatever of the emotions that erupted there a decade ago. The state will replace furnaces and windows and driveways, repaint and reroof and replaster the houses it sells, but it will never be able to restore innocence. That will return, briefly, when the moving vans come, when lights burn again in those houses at night. ■

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 99

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 68.



CLUES WORDS

A. "A great deal about gilding the eastern ____." (Sheridan, *The Critic*)
166 105 180 54 87
8 173 216 78
22

B. Assert without proof
95 69 2 47 29
18

C. Green woodpecker
70 140 136 186 76
102

D. Grotesque monster having disparate parts
53 187 196 109 92
23 137

E. Secure, safe (4 wds)
172 123 205 30 19 151 129 84
191 185 143 73 11

F. "Can any good thing come out of ____?" (John 1:46)
38 45 57 174 111 74 88 130

G. Hallucination; scene of great beauty
21 117 218 145 182 98

H. Done with fullness and exactness; highly detailed
147 163 212 33 20 31 114 107
83

I. Fan-shaped
141 61 188 101 43 155 168 128
1

J. Dirty; mean; mercenary
44 197 16 152 201 175

K. Opportunities for activity, turns
112 28 183 62 96 162 138

L. Displease; sin; cause anger
192 64 200 160 159 80

M. Absurdity; humbug
66 179 198 189 154 202 157 184

N. Self-evident
121 85 27 4 207 156 217 127
178

O. Degrees of precision; fine points
193 17 50 79 5 153 181 26

P. Extremely severe
14 120 67 75 150 115 56 158
52

Q. Elevated, distinguished
203 90 213 215 176 24 10 104

R. Wife of Socrates
7 51 40 118 71 65 63 139
208

S. Moving forces; strengths
214 37 126 6 48 199

T. Leader of the Greeks in the Trojan War
108 15 194 46 100 132 169 25
35

U. Portended evil
142 42 209 89 77 55 110 103
134 36

V. Like, enjoy
124 58 148 86 165 82

W. Not in good usage; unlawful
97 116 135 177 41 3 81 149
167 206 146 72

X. Impresses the mind, moves the feelings
34 144 94 119 211 195 133

Y. Fancy marbles
190 32 170 12

Z. Native; natural
210 106 122 9 49 161 204 131
113

Z1. Pop songs, movies, etc., from the past
93 68 99 164 13 60

Z2. Place appropriate for a person or thing
59 39 91 171 125

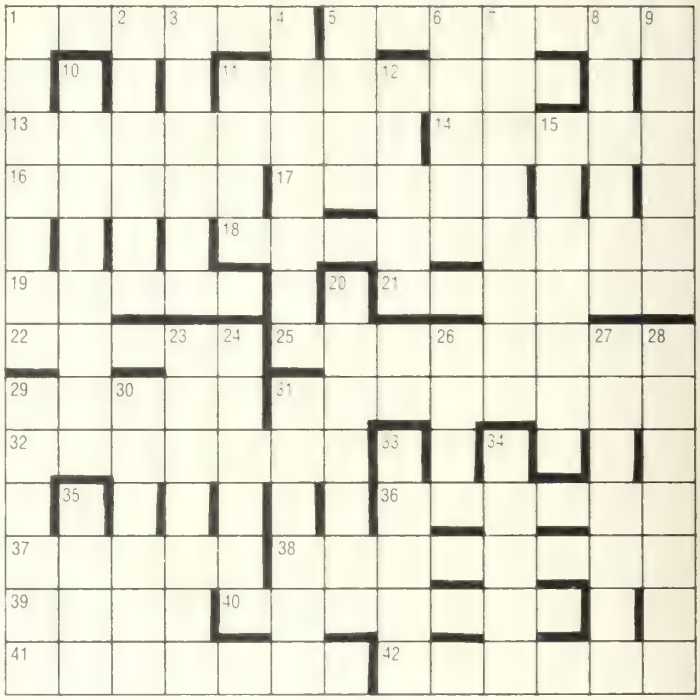
PUZZLE

Lapt Lights

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.

Each Across "light" (diagram entry) is formed by two words of equal length overlapping in all but one letter, as LAP and APT produce the LAPT of the title. Clues for these lights consist simply of a definition of each of the words; either may be clued first. Thus the clue "Indian club (4)" could produce HOPI and WHOP, and the light WHOPI; note that the length given in parentheses is for either overlapping word, not the light. Down clueing follows the normal cryptic scheme.

There are two proper names among the words clued in the Across clues and three more among the answers to the Down clues. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 68.



Across

1. One man's wives split (5)
5. Hope for Bush (6)
11. Resting place for the foreseeable future (6)
13. Old vase is kind of repellent (7)
14. Eastern prince's knack (4)
16. Fame is a problem (4)
17. System for regulating old theaters (4)
18. Inconsiderate charms (8)
19. Clean romantic interlude (4)
21. American author's abode (5)
22. Sketch a bird of prey (4)
25. Season for outrage (7)
29. Goat with kid (4)
31. Stuff shellfish (7)
32. Material that applies gloss to wit (6)
36. Smells from rear parts (5)
37. Damn tax assessment (4)
38. Shakespearean character's declaiming (7)
39. A long time (3)
40. Moor's Mexican farm (6)
41. Pet panics (6)
42. Showy deer (5)

Down

1. Punch set out in hollow receptacles (7)
2. Nasty old man, a nut (6)
3. With passionate absorption . . . Republican, appropriately (6)
4. Steals low, backless cupboard (7)
5. A female with upswept gold hairdo (4)
6. Stabbed and stabbed, losing head (5)
7. Device for asthmatic or hernial disorder (7)
8. Surreptitiously enters Papa's real name (6)
9. Fleet grays stumbling around circle (6)
10. A person with influence put up with relative dummy (8)
11. Put teeth into church (English) law at last (4)
12. Ate without notice and vanished (5)
15. Evergreen one raised—for instance, pine (7)
20. Bachelor nobly reorganized old sinful locale (7)
23. Seducer takes time during passion (7)
24. Heard one leaving English town (6)
26. Took to one's heels and rasped "Not I" (4)
27. Poles train inside: running, bit of sumo and wrestling holds (7)
28. Oppression and the extremes of Trumpery were in charge of New York (7)
29. Stone crystals start like Fuller's dome (6)
30. Grab up two articles and fruit (6)
31. A record includes the brightest stars (6)
33. Torah provides symbolic guidance if one is replaced by Catholic (5)
34. Astronaut finally gets into space, going up to take a ride (5)
35. Familiar reptile? Sounds like nonsense (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Lapt Lights," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the May issue. Winners of the January 1991 puzzle, "FAN-cy Free," are Tessence Monks, Reston, Virginia; P. Janee Jacobs, New York, New York; and Narayan Acharya, Boston, Massachusetts.

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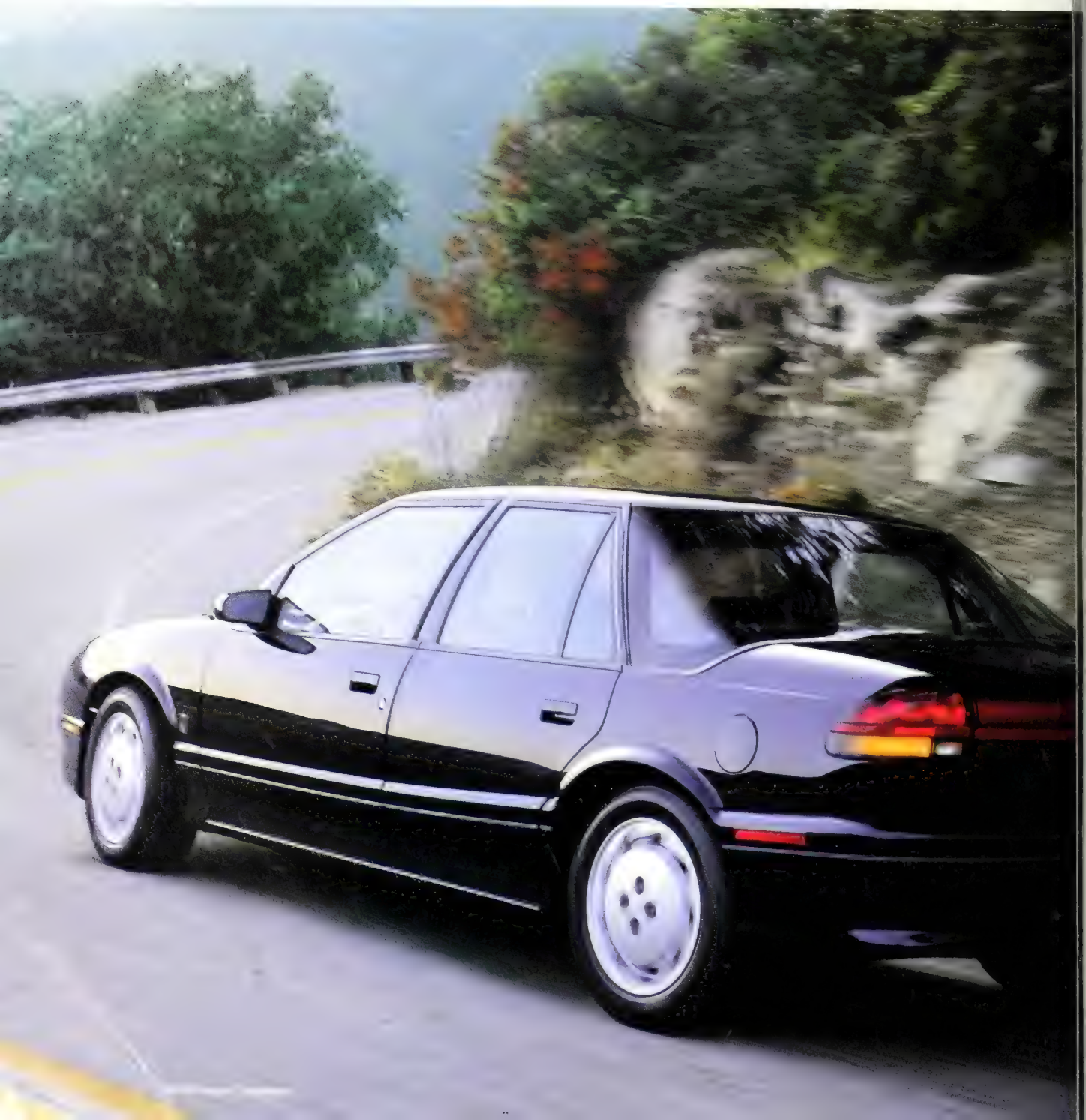
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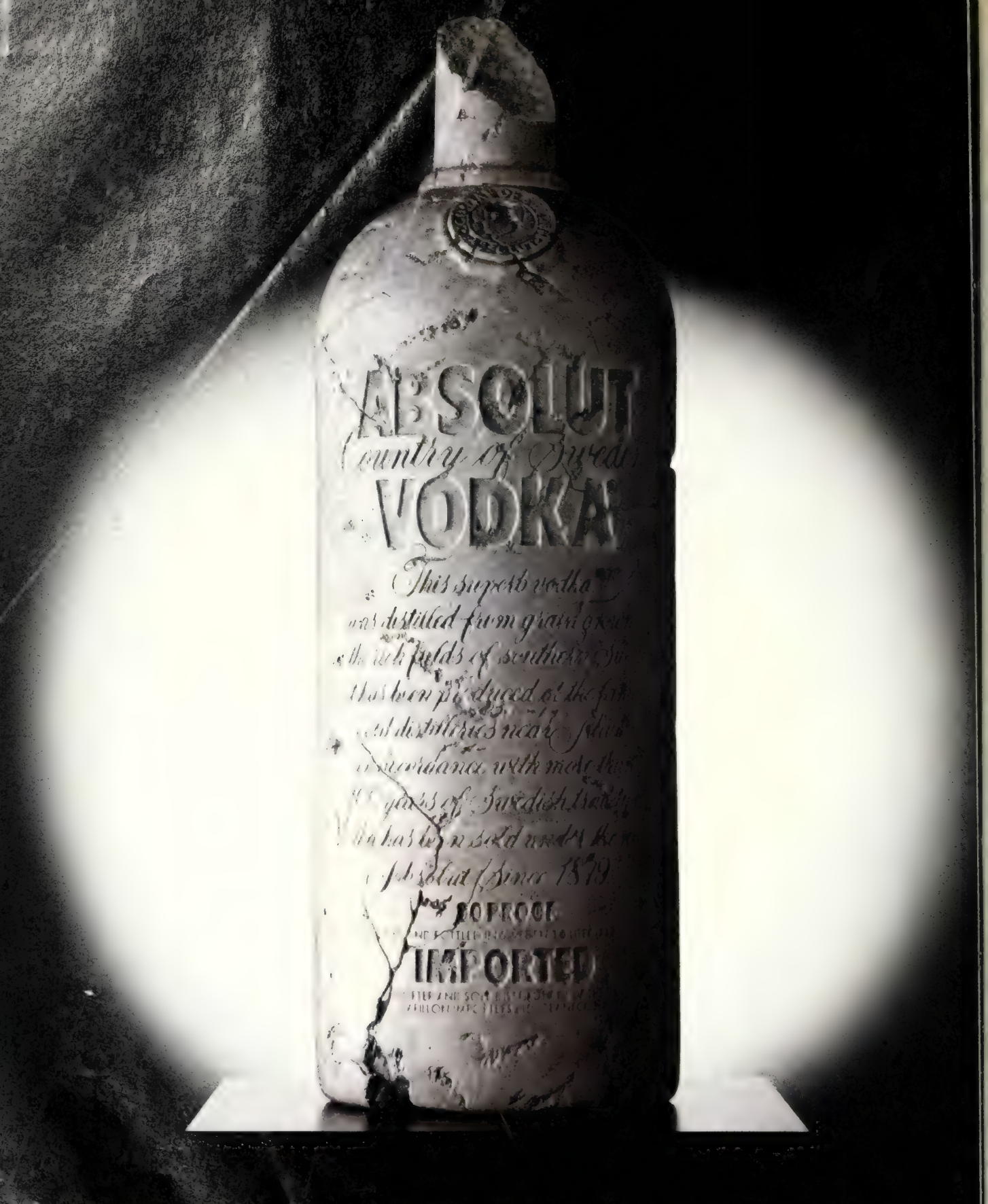
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LETTERS

The Incas and Modernization

Mario Vargas Llosa would have us believe ["Questions of Conquest," December 1990] that the conquest of Latin America by Europeans brought self-determination to the Americas. He concludes that "if forced to choose between the preservation of Indian cultures and their complete assimilation, with great sadness I would choose modernization of the Indian population, because there are priorities; and the first priority is, of course, to fight hunger and misery."

But what about the corporate, governmental, and military forces of "modernization" and assimilation in Latin America that each day drive indigenous people from their subsistence farms into the mountains, onto plantations as dollar-a-day laborers, or into the miles upon miles of gray cardboard slums that surround every Latin American city? As chronicled by international human-rights groups, tens of thousands of these people have been systematically tortured and killed when speaking out for their rights to food and shelter, self-determination, education, a living wage, and equal treatment before the law.

I recently asked a Guatemalan K'Amjobal Indian who had been granted political asylum in the United States for her opinion on the quincentennial celebrations of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. Her response: "What are they celebrating? That they have been killing us for 500 years and continue to kill us? They kill us with guns, knives, and machetes. They burn our villages. They drive us from our lands. When we hide in the mountains, they bomb us. They call our language a dialect. They deny us water, then say we are dirty. They burn our harvest and give us no relief as we watch our children die of hunger. I don't see that there is anything for us to celebrate about the arrival of Columbus."

Victoria Sanford Zepeda
San Francisco

It is unfortunate that so eminent a writer as Mario Vargas Llosa is spared the indignity of fact checking. The Inca Empire, great though it was, never came close to embracing, as he writes, "three quarters of South America"; at most it covered one eighth. Such a mistake betrays more serious flaws in his beguiling tract. The first question he raises—why the Incas fell to a small Spanish invasion—is interesting, but he strangely ignores the seminal work of such modern scholars as John Hemming, author of *The Conquest of the Incas*, and Alfred Crosby, author of *The Columbian Exchange*, who have gone a long way toward answering it.

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced; volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

The short explanation for the Inca Empire's collapse is the onslaught of Old World disease to which Native Americans had little or no immunity. The population of the Tawantinsuyu fell not from twenty million to six million in three centuries, as Vargas Llosa asserts, but from twenty million to one million in sixty years. About half the loss occurred during the first "virgin soil" smallpox pandemic, which reached Peru shortly before Pizarro's main assault. This plague removed the great emperor Huayna Capac in his prime, his most suitable heir, and many other leaders. It led directly to the civil war that the Spaniards exploited.

Vargas Llosa's suggestion that the Incas—a preliterate civilization, like all others in ancient Peru—somehow suppressed the art of writing because they feared individual expression is shockingly silly and naive. Not long after the conquest, several Incas took up the foreign weapon of the pen to defend themselves, writing or dictating works, mainly in Spanish, that have come to light since William Prescott wrote his classic *History of the Conquest of Peru* in the 1840s. Much of the best modern scholarship has been devoted to these documents, and they have transformed our knowledge of Peru's past. Vargas Llosa exhorts us to read the chronicles. Why, then, does he ignore elements within them that tell the Indian side? Is it because they do not confirm his image of Inca society as an anthill? Or is it because, as he once admitted in the *New York Times*, "I've never liked the Incas"?

If Vargas Llosa were to read Felipe Guaman Poma's *Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno*, he might discover an eloquent plea for liberty from European misrule—possibly the first of its kind. If he were to read the *Relación* of Titu Kusi Yupanqui, he might learn that the emperor's mistake was to underestimate the hairy barbarians. The massacre at Cajamarca was committed against unarmed courtiers who fought Toledo steel with their bare hands before the Inca was dragged from his litter by Pizarro. After that, other Incas waged a heroic resistance, burning Cuzco in an attempt to destroy the invaders and defending a neo-Inca free state that held out in the mountains beyond Machu Picchu for forty years. Burning one's sacred capital is not the act of a people paralyzed by superstition. Fighting against plague and sustained invasion is hardly "servile obedience . . . transferred . . . to the new masters." And demanding freedom from tyranny is not the work of a people who do not know what freedom means.

Vargas Llosa's essay is a pseudo-historical fantasy cobbled together from inadequate and obsolete sources for the purpose of allowing him to justify the conquest by blaming victims for what Vargas Llosa imagines to be their sin against free will. Then, by shifting focus to a small jungle tribe, he craftily conceals the scale of the ethnic struggle in modern Peru. In fact, about half the population still speaks the Inca language and maintains the indigenous culture that once

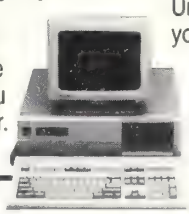
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fed and clothed the Andes. Peru might repeat those achievements if it would learn from that living culture and allow it to develop.

That a man of Vargas Llosa's gifts should still believe Indians must sacrifice their identity for a Procrustean future reveals where the fatal archaism of his country truly lies—in the social Darwinist myopia of its white elite. If this is the level of understanding that the conquistadores' descendants have attained, no wonder Peru's problems remain unsolved.

Ronald Wright
Port Hope
Ontario, Canada

After reading Mario Vargas Llosa's essay, I congratulate the descendants of the Incas in his country who saw through his triple-talking, inveigling words and voted against him in favor of the Japanese-Peruvian candidate for president, Alberto Fujimori. The voters must have known that in Vargas Llosa they'd get a Latin American version of Margaret Thatcher, a master of privateering more ominous than our own Reagan, with his own kind of casuistic logic and a paternalism that doesn't stop even at the cultural demolition of Native Americans throughout the continent.

Andrés Berger
Lake Oswego, Ore.

Mario Vargas Llosa proves himself an excellent diagnostician; I certainly agree with his implicit judgment of the Incan "anthill" society as pre-Hispanic South America's zenith of civilization and nadir of culture.

Otherwise, I found his piece appalling. Never have I read a more telling or, lamentably, better-written exhortation to immediately shoulder the White Man's Burden. Yes, he says, the Spanish conquest of South America infected that continent with a horrible scourge of greed and murder; now, four and a half centuries later, Vargas Llosa's only cure is to eliminate entirely the scattered remnants of the original healthy body.

Good Lord. Even after his extensive background in history, can it be that Vargas Llosa still does not know

that over the past 450 years the definition of "modernization" has been ever-changing and that what was once perceived as progressive sometimes is revealed later as ghastly and cruel? He himself points out that there *was* no hunger in South America before the conquistadores. And what misery is greater than the destruction of one's language, culture, and relationship with the land? What misery is greater than the creation of Vargas Llosa's sanctified "individuality" and the roles of consumer and wage slave in a modern anthill of cities and factories? It seems that only Vargas Llosa is given—or has given himself—the opportunity to make these awful choices; nowhere does he even consider what the Indians themselves might choose. (Admittedly, for better or worse, most choose assimilation.)

Nor does it seem to occur to Vargas Llosa that choices made by people other than the descendants of Spanish colonials might include such unmentionable goals as slowing economic "development" and instituting equitable redistributions of wealth. Such options are evidently so idealistic as to not warrant mention at all.

It's tragic that as fine a writer as Vargas Llosa is, from a country such as Peru—where poets are still fully acknowledged cultural and political legislators, where the word can still be a potent, dangerous weapon—has so fully shouldered the White Man's Burden. I'm sure his "great sadness" is sincere; perhaps it has even kept him up a night or two. But such emotion seems to me to be crocodile tears shed while devouring yet another rich, irreplaceable, millennia-old culture "for its own good." May God forgive us—I see no reasons why the Indians should.

Richard Lehnert
Santa Fe, N.M.

The History of Soviet History

In his astute essay "Restructuring Yesterday's News" [December 1990], historian Eric Foner explains how the Soviet Union has become "the land of the 'unpredictable past.'" With *glasnost* replacing the Iron Curtain and *perestroika* aiming at restructuring their society, Soviet historians have been eagerly crafting something else to replace their unsavory czarist and revolutionary pasts.

But what if Soviet historians become desperate in this quest to rewrite history and need inspiration? I suggest they peruse our latest presidential memoir for a model exercise in historical inexactitude.

Horace Montgomery
Athens, Ga.

Which Witch Is Which?

As a pagan, I was extremely disappointed at the careless title, "Witch-Hunting in High School," given to an excerpt from an occult crime manual [Readings, December 1990]. Yes, it's catchy, but it's also an extremely poor choice, since the material is about sa-



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tanists, *not* witches.

Pagans, many of whom *are* witches, have worked hard for many years to change the connotation of evil associated with "witches." Wicca, the witches' nature religion, is recognized by the IRS. Wiccan clergy have been invited to recent ecumenical councils. We are not satanists, and the article's title makes an overt connection between the two, undermining years of effort to dispel centuries-old lies about us.

Words, as the editors know, have great power. Words alone got innocent women hung in Salem, Massachusetts, in the seventeenth century. Today, the right words from the right sources may end further misunderstanding.

Diana J. Sunday
Bowie, Md.

Catholic Priests and Sex

The December 1990 Harper's Index statistic stating that half of the Catholic priests in the United States are sexually active is speculative, useless, and harmful. The statistic is based on the estimate of A. W. Richard Sipe, a resigned priest, now married, who has written a book on celibacy. Sipe relied for his research, he admits, chiefly on 500 priests who came to him for psychotherapy and 500 other people who were sexual partners of priests. This sample is hardly representative; such an estimate is akin to taking a poll in a hospital and concluding that a very high percentage of the general population has cancer.

The harm consists in the possibility that readers might use such an Index number to make a judgment on the vast majority of priests who are decent people, faithful to their commitment, and doing the hard work of their calling well.

Rev. Kenneth J. Doyle
Director, Office for Media Relations
United States Catholic Conference
Washington

Editors' response: The research cited involved a total of 1,500 people interviewed on a regular basis over a period of twenty-five years, beginning in 1960. Half of the 1,000 priests interviewed were not in therapy. The writer also overlooks a key distinction between surveys or polls—which rely on statistical representation—and ethnographic or anthropological studies, which follow participants over time and question them about not only themselves but also the population of which they are a part.

In the Sand Trap

Christopher Hitchens's Washington Letter on the administration's web of motivations for war with Iraq ["Why We Are Stuck in the Sand," January] overlooked one additional incentive: Immediately prior to the invasion, Neil Bush, the President's son and political lightning rod for the S&L debacle, was the major news story in this country. Once Iraq invaded Kuwait and hundreds of thousands of American troops were sent to Saudi



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Arabia, the younger Bush, quite predictably, disappeared from the headlines.

Ken Fisler
Berea, Ohio

Christopher Hitchens, that sly fellow, is up to his usual tricks. He contrasts a 1987 article in which Laurie Mylroie and I advocated support for Iraq with my recent writings arguing that the West stop Saddam Hussein before he becomes an even greater menace. This, Hitchens implies, is inconsistent.

Is it? In 1987 Ayatollah Khomeini was still alive, and his troops were inside Iraq. Had they succeeded in overrunning Baghdad, much of the Middle East could have fallen under the sway of an especially aggressive and intolerant form of Islam. Saddam Hussein, for all his faults, prevented such a disaster.

By 1990, however, the Iran-Iraq war had ended, Khomeini had died, Iranian revolutionaries were absorbed with domestic problems, and Saddam had gone from invaded to invader. Am I illogical to suppose that changed circumstances permit changed policies? Or would Hitchens have my 1987 views bind me eternally to Saddam?

The same logic, incidentally, would have compelled the U.S. government to refuse to help Stalin against Hitler or to keep subsidizing Moscow into the 1950s and beyond. Times change.

Besides, as a leftist in 1991 figuring out what went wrong, Hitchens knows far more about the subject of unapologetically changing one's views than do I.

Daniel Pipes
Director
Foreign Policy Research Institute
Philadelphia

Christopher Hitchens replies: Mr. Pipes fails to notice that I took care to criticize not the inconsistency but the dismal consistency *of his positions, which have always oscillated strictly according to the requirements of power.*

Specks of Inoffensiveness

I agree with Lewis H. Lapham's December 1990 column, "Acceptable Opinions." Inoffensive opinions are a dust, specks of matter ground fine from over-fastidious thought. In the salt marsh of contemporary life, no battle is fought, no spectacular desire is entertained. You pay your buck, you go to the next room, you talk philosophy with a whore, and the next day one of your friends is famous. That's modern life. After a stunning series of ages and arts, mythical creatures and soldiers, slim-eyed virgins, visions inside caves, cathedrals — after all this — we have the hero of our day: T. S. Eliot. One could compare him to a houseplant. Aldous Huxley, do the twist. Everybody say Nietzsche. Let's hear it for the liberal state. And so on. And so on.

Thomas Graves
Cambridge, Mass.



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NOTEBOOK

Hard times

By Lewis H. Lapham

The art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose as to get the most feathers with the least hissing.

—Ascribed to Colbert

The proofs of recession had been so unmistakable for so many months that I had thought President Bush might wish to say something pertinent on the topic in his State of the Union address. He spoke on January 29, and January had been an especially grim month along the whole line of the economic front. The Bank of New England failed on January 6, at a cost to the government of $2.3 billion; on January 7 the Defense Department canceled a $52 billion weapons contract, obliging two defense contractors (McDonnell Douglas and General Dynamics) to lay off 10,000 workers in St. Louis and Fort Worth; over the course of the next two weeks the unemployment rate reached 6 percent; Eastern Airlines collapsed and Pan American World Airways filed for protection under the bankruptcy laws; numerous major corporations, among them Occidental Petroleum and Manufacturers Hanover, halved the dividend paid to stockholders; the governors of twenty-eight states declared what one of them called "financial martial law" and preached what another of them called "the gospels of austerity" (i.e., more taxes and fewer public services); the big automobile companies reported heavy losses, and the consumer-confidence index receded to its lowest ebb since the Great Depression.

Together with the news of general and institutional failure, the media supplied a fund of grim anecdotes that measured the winter's defeats in the specific instances of individual suffering and panic: people losing jobs, houses, their definitions of self; a woman in Iowa too frightened to go into a store because she couldn't afford to buy anything; a former owner of a marketing company in California glad of the chance to clean toilets; two high school students in North Carolina who had given up the hope of college; and a woman in Massachusetts saying, "It's scary; it's like unemployed people are coming out of the sky, there are so many of them."

The casualty reports apparently didn't make much of an impression on President Bush. Buoyed by the applause of the Congress on the evening of January 29, the President talked mostly about his beloved war in Iraq and his exciting collection of planes and boats in the Persian Gulf. He took up the question of the nation's troubled economic affairs with an air of faint distaste, as if any extended discussion about money was somehow beneath the dignity of a gentleman. About a third of the way into his speech he descended to the topic by means of a transition from the patriotic heights of sententious moralism:

"We are resolute and resourceful," he said. "If we can selflessly confront evil for the sake of good in a land so far away, then surely we can make this land all that it should be."

For the next fifteen minutes Mr. Bush read through the list of catchwords that his speechwriters deemed appropriate to the occasion—"hard work of freedom," "shining purpose," "thousand points of light," "next American century," "economic expansion temporarily interrupted," "what America is all about," etc., etc. He dutifully performed the ritual of polite phrases, and at one point he even went so far as to try to express a feeling of heartfelt concern. Blinking earnestly in the light, his voice reaching for the note of tremulous sincerity, he said:

"I know, tonight, in some regions of our country, people are in genuine economic distress. And I hear them."

The effect was embarrassing. It was obvious that Mr. Bush didn't hear anybody who wasn't talking to him about the sport of war in "a land so far away." His attempt at genuine emotion proved as unctuous and vacant as the sentiment sent to an unknown nephew on a Hallmark card. His failure was one of the imagination, what his handlers in the 1988 election campaign recognized as his difficulty with "the vision thing." His words were empty because he couldn't see through the veil of abstraction (deficit, interest rate, percentage of unemployed, loans defaulted, etc.) to the scenes of human suffering implicit in the numbers. He didn't know—quite literally—what he was talking about.

Given Mr. Bush's temperament and the nature of his experience, his lack of sympathy is by no means surprising. Listening to him speak, I re-

membered that he was a rich man, accustomed from birth to the attitudes of mind associated with the habits of privilege and wealth. Rich people find it almost impossible to imagine the existence of anybody unlike themselves. Their indifference follows from their inability to take seriously other people's desires, and they constantly ask themselves the peevish questions, "Who *are* all those other people out there, and what in Heaven's name do they *want*?" The self becomes so inextricably identified with money that the rich man imagines that only his attachment to it gives it meaning, substance, and virtue. Money has no discernible reality in the hands of lesser mortals because lesser mortals have no decent use for it. The philosophers of the reactionary Right dress up this congenital selfishness with the argument that although money is good for the rich it is bad for the poor. The rich know how to ward off the corrosive evil of government subsidy and inherited stock portfolios. Similar temptations placed in the way of the poor (such as welfare payments, student loans, or food stamps) invariably corrupt their morals and destroy their sense of self worth.

Because the rich object to the very thought of other people also becoming rich—crowding the golf courses, commanding tables at the better restaurants, taking up too much of the available light, space, air, and publicity—nothing comforts them so much as reading the obituary notices of their peers, or the reports of ruin and catastrophe visited, like moral judgments, on the lower classes. From the point of view of people with money in hand, an economic recession is always extremely good news.

As long ago as last December the secretary of the treasury, Nicholas Brady, a friend of Mr. Bush's and himself a rich man, put the matter as plainly as possible in answer to a journalist's question about the state of the deteriorating economy: "I don't think it's the end of the world," he said, "even if we have a recession. We'll pull back out of it again. No big deal."

No big deal for Mr. Brady, who rests comfortably on an expensive fortune and certainly not the end of the world for Mr. Brady's fellow members of the Links Club and the Essex County Hunt, who welcome the bracing atmosphere of bankruptcy and debt as a sign that soon they will have the chance to buy property at gratifyingly distressed prices. The business principle is as simple as the looting of Kuwait. Students of human unhappiness as different from one another as J. P. Morgan and Voltaire understood that the comfort of the rich requires an abundant supply of the poor. Without the goads and spurs of poverty, who would clean the toilets in California, or carry the golf clubs at Burning Tree, or enlist in President Bush's armies?

Although the mathematics of recession remain constant—the rich get richer, the poor get poorer—the tone of the accompanying sophism reflects the balance of power between the possessing and the nonpossessing



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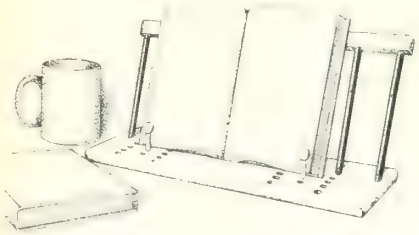
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classes. If it is thought that the poor offer a clear and present danger to the moral perfection of the status quo, the rich give some thought to their choice of words. During the recession of 1982 the managers of the national finance took as much care with their rhetoric as with their raids on the Treasury. If the Bush administration no longer feels obliged to maintain anything other than the minimum appearance of polite concern, it is because the rigged financial markets of the Reagan administration called into being what can be fairly described as an American *rentier* class.

Between 1978 and 1987 American families belonging to the poorest 20 percent of the population became 8 percent poorer; during the same period of time American families within the richest 20 percent of the population became 13 percent richer. The disparity between rich and poor was most glaringly apparent at the extreme points of measurement. The income received by the upper 1 percent of American families improved by 49.8 percent in the years between 1977 and 1988; simultaneously, and by no means accidentally, the income received by families in the lowliest 1 percent of the population declined by 14.8 percent. Somewhere toward the middle of the decade of the 1980s, for the first time in the nation's history, the income that the American people earned from capital (i.e., from rents, dividends, and interest) equaled the sum earned as wages.

The people who profited so handsomely from the miracle of the junk-bond markets and the wonders of deregulation meant to keep what they had, and the election of President Bush ratified the division of the spoils. The company of the blessed (i.e., citizens of newfound leisure enjoying the view from the society's box seats) may not represent an impressive percentage of the population (probably no more than 5 percent), but when counted as an absolute number (ten or twelve million timid and self-interested individuals) they comprise a formidable political faction. By and large they are the people who manage the government, operate the media and the banks, control the universities and the advertising images, print the money, and write the laws. Not all of them, of course, have had the sense to recognize their own interests, and I assume that a good many of them failed to heed the advice of their accountants last summer and so neglected to buy heavily in the bond markets. Some others among them undoubtedly found themselves on the wrong side of the corporate ledger when it came time for the company chairman to write the awful memorandum about how the company had no choice (given the need to "restore America's competitive spirit in the world") but to let go entire battalions of its middle management.

Even so, and no matter what accidents might befall as much as a third of the membership, the possessing classes stand to profit from the recession. Assured of their prerogatives, and knowing that their interests will be flatteringly portrayed in the press, the possessing classes can count on the full faith and backing of President Bush. By the end of January they understood that the phrase "thousand points of light" referred to the fireworks displays in Kuwait and Iraq. If they had any further doubts about the President's distrust of the American poor, they had only to study the bias embedded in the budget that he presented to the Congress on February 4. Like the State of the Union address, the budget offered no concessions to charity: no public works; no nonsense about social safety nets. Richard Darman, the budget director, complained, becomingly, about so much money (the wretched entitlements) still being wasted on the greedy poor, and he recommended a subtraction of $46.6 billion over the next five years from the line items that fall under Medicare, farm price supports, and schools. With the projection of a $318 billion deficit for the next fiscal year (a sum certain to prove grossly understated), everybody holding cash or its equivalents could look forward both to a near-term fall in property prices and a long-term rise of the interest rates.

Even if the Bush administration wished to correct the economic imbalances in the country, I doubt that it possesses the means to do so. The government's fiscal and monetary

policies appear to work against one another, and the interests of the domestic economy seem almost directly opposed to the interests of the international economy. Nor can anybody expect much help from the Congress, which endorses (unanimously and by acclamation) whatever expedient purpose serves its own nonpartisan vanity and cowardice.

Like the President, the Congress obeys the rule of money, and the successful politician learns, as do the merely rich, that in order to preserve the coldness of heart necessary to the maintenance of a safe fortune or a public image he must alienate himself from anything so subversive as an honest thought or a magnanimous act. He can buy a place for himself in the midst of events (the front row at the Los Angeles Coliseum, say, or a seat in the United States Senate), but if he knows what's good for his career (and President Bush always has known, as unerringly as a blind pig on the scent of a white truffle, what's good for his career) then he will listen to the advice of the family lawyers (or the National Security Council, or the Federal Reserve Board, or the Joint Chiefs of Staff) who warn him against the folly of generous feeling. The rich have very little talent for loving anybody other than themselves. It's possible to love one's dog, or one's dress, or one's duck-shooting hat (maybe even one's air force or one's Ferragamo shoes), but a human being presents a problem of a far more difficult order of magnitude.

In his State of the Union address Mr. Bush spoke more touchingly about the distress of the nation's banks than he did about the suffering of his fellow citizens. The priority of his concern reminded me of a press conference last summer at which a government bank examiner was trying to explain why it was going to cost yet another $2 billion to make good the debts of yet another savings bank. The man was impatient and annoyed. For some days he had been looking for trace elements of liquidity in the desert of the balance sheet, and he was in no mood to comment on the loss of jobs likely to result from so spectacular a fraud. In answer to what he thought was a stupid question, he said, in an irritated tone of voice, "Excuse me, I only represent banks, not people."

From the point of view of the season subscribers in the box seats, the recession presents itself as spectacle—something seen on television, a kind of down-market sitcom that allows the audience to laugh about the beggars pawing through the garbage in the streets, about the 37 million Americans who cannot afford the price of health insurance, about the grammar schools abandoned to the drug trade, about all those homeless people lying around on the sidewalks. If we find the jokes depressing, we can always switch the channel to the scenes of glorious war in Iraq. The brightly smiling newscasters will assure us, once again, that we are doing the right and noble thing, that we have become, just as President Bush promised, a kinder, gentler nation. ■



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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of U.S. combat deaths in Vietnam before a Washington antiwar rally drew more than 75,000 people : 14,000
Number of U.S. combat deaths in the Persian Gulf before the January 26 rally that drew more than 75,000 people : 0
Percentage of Americans who say that the government should ban antiwar demonstrations : 23
Percentage who say that they favor more Pentagon control of U.S. war coverage : 57
Percentage of TV evening-news coverage of the Vietnam War between 1965 and 1970 that depicted casualties in battle : 3
Number of walls the size of the Vietnam Memorial it would take to list all the Vietnamese who died in the war : 69
Number of courses on the Vietnam War required for graduation from West Point : 0
Percentage increase, since 1988, in the number of American college students who have their own credit card : 37
Average number of pounds of pennies in an American home : 6
Estimated percentage of all deposits in America's nine largest banks that are held in foreign branches : 51
Amount the federal government spent last year on the savings and loan bailout, per hour : $7,420,000
Percentage increase, during 1990, in the number of times the word "recession" appeared in the *New York Times* : 200
Percentage of U.S. taxpayers who pay more in Social Security tax than in federal income tax : 38
Change, since 1980, in the amount checked off on tax returns for the Presidential Campaign Fund : −$8,500,000
Chances that an American who strongly favors the U.S. attack on Iraq is in the market for a house : 1 in 5
Chances that an American who strongly opposes the attack is in the market for a house : 1 in 12
Total amount Kuwait invested in the United States last year : $4,000,000,000
Portion of total Arab League GNP generated by countries that export oil : 2/3
Chances that an Arab lives in an Arab League country that exports oil : 1 in 3
Number of countries worldwide that have been invaded since 1945 : 23
Number of these invasions the United States sent troops to help repel : 3
Number of cats the U.S. Army has shot in the head since 1983 in order to research battlefield injuries : 648
Estimated number of American dogs that have been named as beneficiaries in wills : 1,000,000
Number of beagles used in radiation research that the Department of Energy will bury in a toxic-waste dump in 1991 : 850
Gallons of radioactive beagle excrement that will be buried : 34,000
Estimated percentage of the oil spilled by the *Exxon Valdez* that has been removed from the environment : 8
Number of bees that invaded a Bayport, New York, house while the owners were on vacation last spring : 20,000
Estimated pounds of honey they produced before being removed : 10
Average number of miles an item of food consumed in the United States travels before it is eaten : 1,200
Average number of squirts from a cow's udder required to produce a gallon of milk : 345
Ratio of the size of the female spider monkey's clitoris to the size of the male monkey's penis : 2:1
Average number of months an American teenage girl is sexually active before using birth control : 12
Change, between the ages of 9 and 14, in the percentage of American girls who say "I am happy the way I am" : −31
Change in the percentage of boys who say this : −21
Rank of white, Hispanic, and black girls, among those who lose the most self-esteem during puberty : 1,2,3
Amount the British Boy Scouts have earned since 1988 by selling corporate advertising space on merit badges : $500,000
Stud fees the Justice Department plans to earn in 1991 from a show horse seized from an alleged drug dealer : $2,500,000
Price of a 1-cc vial of Japanese Wagyu bull semen, from Don Lively of Georgetown, Texas : $250
Winning volume in the Japanese Annual Loud Voice Contest, held in Tokyo last December, in decibels : 115.8
Number of participants in the All-India Conference of Eunuchs, held in Ghonsla last December : 1,000

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READINGS

[Essay]

THE GULF WAR: AN ARAB PERSPECTIVE

From "Global Viewpoint," by Rami G. Khouri, in the Spring issue of New Perspectives Quarterly, *published in Los Angeles. Khouri is a columnist for the* Jordan Times, *an English-language newspaper published in Amman; he edited the newspaper from 1982 to 1990.*

Americans are shortsighted and naive to boast that Iraq is not going to be another Vietnam. Militarily, of course, they are right. Although the war is likely to last for months, there is little doubt that Iraq ultimately will be defeated.

Politically, however, the war with Iraq will be the granddaddy of all Vietnams. For when the shooting stops, it won't be George Bush's coalition—that posse of desperadoes and bounty hunters which is about as politically powerful as a dead leaf—that will determine the political trends of the region. It will be the bitter and resentful grass-roots sentiments of hundreds of millions of Arabs.

I would estimate that three quarters of the people of the Arab world stand with Iraq—not in support of its occupation of Kuwait but in its confrontation with the United States. Every day that Iraq holds out against the United States and strikes against Israel, that grass-roots support for Iraq grows.

Understanding the contemporary Arab frame of mind is essential in order to grasp the terms of reference that will dictate events in the aftermath of the war.

The Arab world reached an historic turning point in the 1980s: People lost their fear. After the low-water mark of 1982, when the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Lebanese capital of Beirut were shelled from the hills by Israel with the support of the American Navy, the Arab people became fed up.

The Arabs had been so beaten down over the decades by their own autocratic leaders, by their inability to manifest their sense of pan-Arab unity, by their inability to do anything about Israel, by their inability to forge productive and honorable relations with the great powers, that they had hit rock bottom.

Defeat seemed so complete that renewal was the only way out. And as elsewhere in the world—such as in Catholic Poland—large numbers of people turned to God when they gave up on the temporal order. From Jordan to Egypt, from Algeria to Lebanon, it was Islam that first gave Arabs the strength to fight back.

No longer were Arabs willing to suffer the regional military disequilibrium with Israel, or be part of a game played by the Western imperial military powers—Britain, France, and the United States—that drew Arab borders based upon their own colonial interests.

And no longer were Arabs willing to put up with domestic autocracy and tyranny or the economic and social inequity that characterized the Arab world for so many decades. Starting with the Palestinian and Lebanese Shiite resistance to Israel in southern Lebanon, with the *intifada* and the struggle for democracy in Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Lebanon, Yemen, and other places, Arabs began saying in the 1980s that they were willing to take more destruction than an enemy or oppressor could throw at them, including, as now in Iraq, death by high-technology machines.

Even though most Arabs don't support the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein's fearless-



American Dragons, *by Carter Hines, from an exhibit of his work this winter at the Franz Bader Gallery in Washington, D.C. Hines paints with oils on machine-made Oriental carpets that have been primed with acrylic.*

ness in standing up to our enemies, Israel and America, appeals to the new spirit of the Arab world—a spirit that says "We'd rather die on our feet than live groveling on the ground."

Saddam Hussein is, of course, no Santa Claus. He is a rough man. He kills people ruthlessly. He has lived by the gun all of his life. Yet, this unlikely autocrat has become the very medium of a new Arab fearlessness that aims to cast off oppression and subjugation from abroad and at home.

The great paradox of this conflict is that it is in precisely those Arab countries where the people have started to achieve democracy, where people are free to speak out and express themselves—such places as Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Yemen, and among the Palestinians—that the support for Saddam Hussein is so fervent and widespread.

The United States is supported only by the mercantile autocracies. Egypt, as always, is an exception, because of its obsequious political servitude resulting from dependence on American aid. Another factor is its strong sense of national identity—which allows it, in fits of cash-laden confusion, to wander away temporarily from its home within the family of pan-Arab nationalism.

Inconveniently for the West, the more free and democratic Arab countries become, the less sympathetic they will be to foreign designs for the region, and the more anti-Western they will become.

Saddam was not the chosen leader of these Arabs seeking a new order. After he invaded Kuwait, every Arab country without exception, far from praising him, called on him to withdraw at once, and many Arab leaders undertook immediate and fervent diplomatic action to secure such a withdrawal. But the Saudis and Egyptians panicked and called in the Americans.

The minute American forces landed in the region, the whole equation changed. The issue was no longer Iraq occupying Kuwait. It was Iraq standing up to the arrogant West, holding out for a solution to the many regional, economic, and political problems that plague us.

For all of us now, Iraq symbolizes the willingness to get up off our knees and confront our enemies. And the longer Saddam Hussein drags out the war, the more he will elicit support and redeem the sense of humiliation Arabs have felt for years.

It is a source of pride to Arabs that Saddam hit Israel with missiles, as he promised. Of course, the missiles will do little real damage.

But symbolically they are the equivalent of an Arab atomic bomb.

The crucial point that the United States refuses to acknowledge—perhaps through a combination of racism and ignorance—is that what is happening in the hearts and minds of most Arabs is the same thing that South Africans, Eastern Europeans, South Koreans, Filipinos, and Haitians have experienced. Like all those people, we, too, aspire to rid ourselves of unjust and irresponsible political orders.

For most Arabs, Israel is the equivalent of the white minority regime in South Africa. For most Arabs, the Western powers who carved up the Arab nations in their own interests are scarcely different from the Soviets who redrew the map of Eastern Europe. If the West ignores this cry from the hearts of 200 million Arabs, it does so at its own peril.

Yet, instead of grasping this new mood, the West has come into the Gulf with arms, subjecting the rising power of Iraq—which most Arabs perceive as their best lever for addressing the military imbalance with Israel and forcing the Israelis into an honorable, negotiated solution—to the most massive military onslaught since World War II.

We Arabs know that the West can come in here with its F-16's and Stealth fighters and beat the hell out of us. But we don't care anymore. And once a people has reached that state of fearlessness, the Stealth fighter means no more than the tanks of the South African police meant to the children of Soweto.

Human beings cannot be suppressed over long periods of time without fighting back and standing up for their dignity. Why has this lesson of 1989–90, learned so well in Eastern Europe and South Africa, been forgotten when it comes to the Arab world?

The West has money and high technology on its side. We have human nature and history on our side. That means we may lose the war in the weeks and months to come, but we will inevitably win out in the years and decades ahead.

The thin veil of "Arabization" of this U.S. war, created by George Bush's ragtag, cash-register coalition, won't succeed any more than did America's "Vietnamization" strategy. In time, no doubt, the last days of that Asian war will be replayed in our part of the world, with American helicopters lifting their ambassadors from the roofs of U.S. embassies throughout the area, perhaps with a few Arab leaders in tow, clinging by their teeth for dear life and looking forward to a life of exile in Hawaii.

If the United States wants to squander $150 billion and the lives of countless Iraqis to keep a bevy of corrupt, undemocratic autocrats in power, to try to destroy the rising Arab spirit, and to maintain by force of arms an inequitable and unstable political order that has ruled the Arabs for three quarters of a century, it will have no more success than did Jaruzelski in Poland or Ceauşescu in Romania.

[Rules]

ENGULF YOUR BLITZER SPRITZER!

From the rules to the Persian Gulf Party Game, by John Berryhill. Berryhill, a student at the University of Delaware in Newark, disseminated the rules through the Internet computer network in January. Berryhill is completing a Ph.D. in electrical engineering.

The order of channel-hopping is NBC, ABC, CBS, and CNN. At each commercial, unless otherwise indicated, the channel is changed.

If you hear someone on TV say "Scud," take a swig of beer and change the channel, except during Scud attacks. (See below.)

If someone on TV says "Patriot," everyone in the room must salute. The last person to salute takes a shot.

If a Scud attack is reported, everyone must hold their breath. The first person to breathe must go to a sealed room while everyone else takes a shot. That player remains in the room until the "all clear" is sounded.

If someone says "somewhere in eastern Saudi Arabia," all shout "Dhahran." The last person to do so takes a shot and must forgo the next "Scud." The same applies for shouting "Riyadh" upon hearing the phrase "a large air base in central Saudi Arabia." Anyone naming the wrong city must take a shot unless they shout "Taif" before they are called on their error.

Whenever Wolf Blitzer appears on the screen, everyone must shout "woof woof" and drink a wine spritzer.

A shot of Kahlua and coffee is kept on the table. Whenever the phrase "ground war," "ground assault," or "ground attack" is used, the first person to grab the shot gets it.

Every time Dan Rather says something stupid, all shout "change the channel." The last person to do so takes a shot and is forced to watch CBS on another TV until the next "Scud."

[Songs]

NUMBER ONE WITH A BULLET

"Gulf Discs," a list of sixty-seven songs "with lyrics that need thought in scheduling," sent on January 17 by the Radio Training Department of the British Broadcasting Corporation to music programmers at the BBC's local radio stations. The department advised that broadcasting these songs might be "inappropriate or hurtful" in light of the war in the Persian Gulf; the decision whether or not to exclude them from playlists, however, was left to the local programmers.

Artist	*Song*
Abba	Under Attack
The Alarm	68 Guns
The Animals	We Gotta Get Out of This Place
Joan Baez	The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down
Bangles	Walk Like an Egyptian
Pat Benatar	Love Is a Battlefield
Big Country	Fields of Fire
Blondie	Atomic
Kate Bush	Army Dreamers
Cher	Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down)
Eric Clapton	I Shot the Sheriff
Phil Collins	In the Air Tonight
Elvis Costello	Oliver's Army
Cutting Crew	I Just Died in Your Arms Tonight
Desmond Dekker	Israelites
Dire Straits	Brothers in Arms
Duran Duran	View to a Kill
José Feliciano	Light My Fire
First Choice	Armed and Extremely Dangerous
Roberta Flack	Killing Me Softly
Elton John	Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting
John Lennon	Give Peace a Chance
	Imagine
Bob Marley	Buffalo Soldier
Billy Ocean	When the Going Gets Tough
Donny Osmond	Soldier of Love
Paper Lace	Billy Don't Be a Hero
Queen	Killer Queen
	Flash
Tom Robinson	War Baby
The Specials	Ghost Town
Bruce Springsteen	I'm on Fire
Edwin Starr	War
Status Quo	In the Army Now
Cat Stevens	I'm Gonna Get Me a Gun
Tears for Fears	Everybody Wants to Rule the World
10cc	Rubber Bullets
Stevie Wonder	Heaven Help Us All

[Media Strategy]

THE PATH TO (RATINGS) WAR

From a memo sent last November to more than a hundred local television stations around the country by Frank Magid Associates, a Marion, Iowa, media consulting firm, as part of a regular advisory service to its clients. The document was obtained by Howard Kurtz, a reporter for the Washington Post.

The U.S. military is gearing up for war. A quarter of a million troops and billions of dollars in money and equipment have been committed to the Middle East. Tension is rising; our troops say they're ready to go. Are you? When/if war breaks out, it could be the biggest story in history. Imagine if a hurricane hit the entire country and no one knew how long it would last. A war will command that kind of attention. Again: Are you ready?

Covering the home front of a war is not a game in which it's easy to play catch-up. You have to get out and OWN that story in the first twenty-four hours. Do that and the viewers are yours to lose. Make them believe that you are on this story like no station has ever covered a story in your market. Some specifics to talk about and work on:

☐ Decide NOW who'll be handling your coverage. If war breaks out at 2:00 A.M., should one of your primary anchors be brought in? What about Saturday afternoon? Should you stagger your anchors, or work them together?

☐ You'll want a review of which local troops are stationed in the Gulf, and what their roles are. Reactions from family members of soldiers are a must. Sure you want to get those quickly, but what if it's 2:00 A.M.? Are you going to wait until 9:00 A.M.? Or do you wake them up and break the news to them? Have your own battle plans that include flexibility to allow for time of day.

☐ Compile a catalogue entry for every serviceman from your area, including not only family members but other biographical information: What local high school did he or she attend?

Sail the New and Tallest of the *Tall Ships*



Yes, you can have it all. For one wonderful week.
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When did he or she graduate? Is he or she married? Kids? Try to have a photo of every soldier from your area who is now in the Middle East. Compiling the info now will be a whole lot easier than having to ask the family for it when casualty reports start arriving.

Americans do not accept death well. An entire nation can be made distraught by a tornado that kills five, or a random shooting that kills three, or a plane crash that kills fifty. How will we handle it if reports start coming in that thousands of America's young people are dying?

☐ Have a list of experts ready to go. Get some of them to agree to come down to the station as soon as war breaks out to help you analyze what's going on. Of course, Middle East experts are necessary, and a military strategist could be interesting.

☐ Work now on setting up props and graphics. Remember that great map Peter Jennings had in the ABC special *A Line in the Sand*?

☐ Be ready to contact your senators and representatives. Catch them as fast as you can so you can get a reaction from the heart, not the prepared statement they'll come up with a few hours later. And make sure you ask them, Why are we fighting this war?

☐ Know, as well as you can, who the war protesters in your area are likely to be. Is there a vocal "peace activist"? Be ready to get a comment from him or her as soon as fighting breaks out.

☐ Get in touch with all the military contacts you've made in the past six months. Let them know—confidentially—that you intend to commit everything you have to help them communicate with the people of your region, and that you're willing to provide all the help the military needs, and that you'd sure appreciate any help the military units can give you to keep those families and taxpayers informed.

☐ Set guidelines so everybody knows how to handle different situations. If word of a local soldier's death reaches your studio, do you break into programming?

☐ Plan now for what kind of on-air promotion you'll have. You want to tell viewers you're there when they need you, not remind them that you brought them the bad news first. You might want to make sure you have somebody from your promotion department involved in coverage and planning discussions.

☐ When/if war comes, network schedules will change. *Uncle Buck* will not air if we have bombers over Baghdad. Your sales department needs a battle plan almost as much as your news department. Set up stationwide procedures so there won't be mass confusion when every schedule you're familiar with is blown up.



From In Health *magazine.*

[TV News Reports]

GLASNOST, R.I.P.

The following passages are taken from two versions of the script for a television news report on the January 13 Soviet military crackdown in Lithuania. The first was prepared late that night by Tatyana Mitkova, the anchor of a Moscow television news show. The second was adapted by Pyotr Reshetov, the deputy head of Soviet television, from Mitkova's script and handed to her two minutes before airtime. Although Mitkova refused to read the altered copy on the air, it was read by a substitute announcer. Mitkova's report was not aired. The reports were obtained by Michael Dobbs, a reporter for the Washington Post.

Mitkova's version

The representative of the Committee for National Salvation of Lithuania [a pro-Moscow group] told Tass that the committee had approached the Soviet Interior Ministry and the commander of the Vilnius garrison with a request for help in restoring control over television and radio. . . .

This morning [Lithuanian president] Vytautas Landsbergis called on the population to begin a general strike on January 14. Tens of thousands of people have gathered in front of the Supreme Soviet building on Independence Square, despite the imposition of a curfew, in order to listen to broadcast transmissions from the Lithuanian parliament.

Tass reported a radio speech by Landsbergis

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in which he expressed dismay at the fact that Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev had promised not to use military force against sovereign Lithuania but—according to Landsbergis—did not keep his word.

Reshetov's version

According to the information we have received, the Committee of National Salvation, representing social organizations in Lithuania, sent eighty representatives to the Lithuanian parliament and government to discuss the extremely tense situation in Lithuania. However, the delegates not only were not received by the parliament but were beaten by representatives of the Lithuanian parliament armed with heavy metal objects. Twenty-eight people were wounded and admitted to hospitals. The fate of twenty of them is not known.

The representatives of the National Salvation Committee then went to the television station, which has recently called for resistance to orders by central authorities and broadcast calls for war against the Soviet Union. At the television station, the representatives of public organizations of Lithuania were greeted in a very hostile manner. Dozens of armed persons representing Sajudis [the Lithuanian independence movement] were sent against them.

Under these conditions it became impossible to act through appeals and arguments because thousands of people fooled by the separatist propaganda of Sajudis were ready for extreme action. The situation was becoming so tense that people who came to the television center had to turn for help to military units present there.

[Memo]

THE HOLLYWOOD APPROACH

From a memo sent last August to Classic Couriers, a Los Angeles messenger service, by Lynnette Kimmel, an assistant to Jon Peters, the co-chairman of Columbia Pictures. Peters and Peter Guber are the producers of the films Rain Man, Batman, *and* The Bonfire of the Vanities. *The memo was obtained by John H. Richardson, a reporter for* Premiere *magazine.*

As you are probably aware, we frequently send messengers to Mr. Jon Peters's home at 9 Beverly Park. I would appreciate it if Classic Couriers could comply with the following guidelines when delivering to this address.

When delivering to Mr. Peters's home, please park *on the street,* then go to the *walk-up gate* and buzz the house. Wait until you are instructed to come in, then go to the *garage* and wait there for someone to come and get the package from you. Garage is at far right of house. *NEVER,* under any circumstances, go to the front door of his house. Never look at the house.

Also, I would appreciate it if when I call for a "direct" messenger, you deliver the package from here *directly* to Mr. Peters's house without any interruption in between. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

[Correspondence]

THE FINE ART OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT

From an exchange of letters between Eva Marie Steortz, the director of marketing services for Cato Johnson Entertainment, and Ellen Foreman, the advertising manager for Black & Decker, regarding the use of a Black & Decker Univolt drill in the 1990 Twentieth Century Fox film Die Hard 2. *Cato Johnson, an entertainment-marketing firm, was hired by Fox to negotiate "product placements" for* Die Hard 2. *Product placement is the increasingly common practice by which Hollywood studios solicit payments and promotional benefits from manufacturers in exchange for the prominent use of their products in movies. Black & Decker filed a $150,000 lawsuit against Fox last November, after the scene that featured the drill was cut from the film. The letters below are exhibits in the suit.*

October 18, 1989

Dear Ellen:

Per your request, we are forwarding information regarding the opportunity for Black & Decker to gain prominent brand identification and become a promotional partner with Twentieth Century Fox's upcoming feature film *Die Hard 2.*

In the film, a cordless drill is used to unhinge an access door to tunnels that Bruce Willis must crawl through to get around the airport where terrorists have taken control.

This hands-on usage in a heroic effort will make a memorable impact upon the film's audience. Research indicates that this type of film exposure results in brand recall two and a half times greater than that of television commercial





Fair Dinkum* Australia.








***fair dinkum/** —*Colloq.* —*adj.* 1: true, genuine, dinkum ‹are you fair dinkum?› —*interj.* 2: assertion of truth or genuineness ‹it's true, mate, fair dinkum› 3: Come have a fair dinkum great time in Australia.

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

Australia
Come and say G'day.

advertising (a 56 percent average recall, compared with a 22 percent average for television).

We believe *Die Hard 2* provides a great deal of synergy for Black & Decker. Taking advantage of the excitement of *Die Hard 2*, the appropriate targeting, and the June release of the film would allow Black & Decker to capitalize on the Father's Day gift-buying season.

Ellen, the first step is to secure Black & Decker's positioning within the film. The $20,000 fee is contingent upon Black & Decker achieving prominent and identifiable brand identification with hands-on usage of the drill.

Warmest regards,
Eva Marie Steortz

November 20, 1989

Dear Eva:

I finally spoke to our director of marketing and he is very excited about the possibility of doing a promotion with Fox on *Die Hard 2*. In order to get the maximum benefit from a promotion, we would want to get our sales force involved as soon as possible. Is there any way to create a "guaranteed" strong exposure of the product—possibly even a line of dialogue? We have several slogans your writers could play with, including "built like a Black & Decker" and "nothing beats a Black & Decker." Black & Decker has a 90 percent unaided brand awareness in the power-tool category, so it would not "hurt" the integrity of the film.

Best regards,
Ellen Foreman

December 8, 1989

Dear Ellen:

We had a meeting this week with the producers and Twentieth Century Fox's director of promotions on the set of *Die Hard 2*. The scene has been filmed with the drill prominently used. In addition, we have identified the following opportunities to build upon Black & Decker's presence in the film:

1. A clip of a Black & Decker television commercial can be positioned in one of three scenes in the film: on a regular television playing on the airplane's movie screen; on a television playing at a car-rental booth where Bruce uses a fax machine; or on a television playing in the room of one of the army generals.

2. Translight signage can be positioned in the airport where Bruce runs around throughout the film.

3. Additional tools may be incorporated. We are still determining where this may happen and whether good guys will use them.

We are confident that Black & Decker will achieve strong positioning in the film since the producers are being very cooperative.

Regards,
Eva Marie Steortz

March 22, 1990

Dear Ellen:

I just saw a film clip featuring the Univolt drill as the hero in *Die Hard 2*. The scene depicts Bruce and the old man who lives under the airport having dialogue on how he might go through the air ducts to maneuver through the airport unnoticed. The audience hears a drill and sees the Univolt drill. Then the audience sees an access door being successfully removed. There is no mistaking the Black & Decker identification. We are very pleased with the positioning. If we can be of any further assistance, don't hesitate to call.

Regards,
Eva Marie Steortz

[Citation]

THE ROLLING STONEMASONS

From a list of the music videos "most effective in promoting the brick industry," presented last June to MTV by the National Association of Brick Distributors, a trade organization based in Alexandria, Virginia, as part of the association's Brick Achievement Award. The award, which is presented to a person or organization that "promotes the use of brick by example," was given to MTV because the network's "consistent use of brick is unequaled in television."

Artist: Bell Biv DeVoe
Video: *Poison*
Comments: This video was voted number one by the brick industry. Its haunting melody, combined with stark brick walls and pavers, makes the video a hit among masons everywhere.

Artist: Janet Jackson
Video: *Alright*
Comments: Great use of brick's deep rich color to contrast the bright blues, yellows, and greens in Miss Jackson's sassy wardrobe.

Artist: M. C. Hammer
Video: *U Can't Touch This*
Comments: This four-minute-long video has one minute and two seconds of beautiful brick scenes.

FURTHER READINGS

PUBLICATIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO HARPER'S MAGAZINE READERS

New Perspectives Quarterly engages world opinion leaders in politics, business, the arts, and the media in discussions about the most important issues of our time. *NPQ* questions conventional wisdom and searches out and debates innovative ideas. You can join Pierre Trudeau, Czeslaw Milosz, Isabel Allende, John Kenneth Galbraith, Shintaro Ishihara, Ryszard Kapuscinski, and Carlos Salinas de Gortari in dialogue and debate on the issues shaping our future. *New Perspectives Quarterly*: "the antidote to trivalization." Sample copy, $6.50; subscription (4 issues), $24.

The Denver Quarterly, edited by Donald Revell, hosts a dialogue between the genres of contemporary writing and opinion. In regular issues and special numbers devoted to such topics as prose poetry(ies) and Literature & Addiction, we seek always to nourish meaningful diversity. Contributors include John Ashbery, Charles Baxter, Barbara Guest, Carolyn Kizer, and Adam Zagajewski. Sample copy, $5; subscription (4 issues), $15.

The Georgia Review, winner of the National Magazine Award in Fiction,"outshines every comparable periodical in the U.S."—Fred Chappell. Engaging and provocative essays, poems, stories, reviews, graphics. "The best of them all is the amazing *Georgia Review*: modestly priced, superbly conceived and edited."—*The Christian Science Monitor*. Sample copy, $4; subscription (4 issues)

The Iowa Review, "one of the five best small magazines in America," according to *The Christian Science Monitor*, publishes the best in new essays, stories, and poems. Forthcoming issues will include interviews with Robert Haas and Marilyn Robinson; essays by Albert Goldbarth and Carolyn Wright; fiction and poetry by Laura Kalpakian, Joyce Carol Oates, Stephen Dunn, and William Olsen, among others. $15 year.



The Ohio Review is an engaging literary review of the highest quality, offering the reader the best of the best in contemporary American writing. For the past twenty years, *The Ohio Review* has been identified with the vital presence of contemporary literature. Each issue is crafted with care and attention, and is a must for anyone interested in the mystery we call our lives revealed through poetry, fiction, and prose. Sample copy, $3; subscription (3 issues), $12.

North Dakota Quarterly alternates genera issues with special issues, including recent and forthcoming ones o provocative subjects such as "Culture: International Bridge or Barrier? "Nature Writing," and "Deconstructing Columbus." Its Travel/Trava was cited as one of four notable special issues by Gary Talese an Robert Atwan in 1987; "thoughtful and artful." Sample copy, $5; sub scription, $15.



Jonah and the Pink Whale. Swallowe whole by his wife's family and their ambitions for him, Jonah dives into hopeless affair with his sister-in-law, the alluring Julia. Alienation, greed and adultery may never have been more slyly delineated than in th raunchy, irreverent novel. Winner of the 1987 Casa de las America Prize. Cloth, $22.95; paper, $12.95.

Parabola, The Magazine of Myth and Tradition, now in its six teenth year, is a unique quarterly that brings together writers in mythol gy, the great religious and spiritual traditions, literature, popular cultur and the arts, to explore questions of essential human concern. Feature are articles, interviews, traditional folktales and stories, book and fil reviews, and photo essays, complemented by fine artwork and desig Recent themes: Addiction, Money, Attention, Woman, Death, The Tree Life. "Fascinating"—*The Washington Post*. Sample copy, $5; subscrip tion (4 issues), $20.

The Sun is sometimes mystical, sometimes whimsical, alway soulful. A monthly magazine of ideas, *The Sun* celebrates good writin in essays, interviews, fiction, and poetry. Rather than push a particul spiritual or political or literary viewpoint, *The Sun* challenges its reade to live with questions, not answers. People write of their struggle understand their lives, often baring themselves with remarkable candor Sample copy, $3; subscription (12 issues), $30.

Clockwatch Review features lively new fiction an poetry in a magazine *Choice* called "a small package...loaded with trea sures." Winner of a 1990 CCLM Editor's Grant, *Clockwatch* has draw the most praise for its interviews with musicians and artists—includin Suzanne Vega, Vincent Price, Dawn Upshaw, Friz Freleng, Mari Tallchief, Arlo Guthrie, Judith Pintar, Jack Levine, Romare Bearden, E Paschke, Jimmy Buffet, Buddy Guy, and Jeff MacNelly. Sample copy, $ subscription (2 issues), $8.

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Video: *Opposites Attract*
Comments: This year's hottest recording artist successfully blends the seriousness of brick into this whimsically delightful video.

Artist: Elton John
Video: *Club at the End of the Street*
Comments: Mr. John's animated video uses meticulous detail in texturizing the brick and mortar portions of the clip.

Artist: House of Love
Video: *I Don't Know Why I Love You*
Comments: What do rose petals, a snarling pit bull, and half-empty whiskey bottles have in common? They all appear in front of a classic brick wall in this thought-provoking video.

Artist: Nitzer Ebb
Video: *Lightning Man*
Comments: Germany's hottest band successfully captures the feel of old Europe with this mason's delight. The almost all-brick, black-and-white short is a visual testimonial that, yes, brick does survive the test of time.

[Ethnography]

BORN TO BE TENURED

From "Women in Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs," by Columbus B. Hopper and Johnny Moore, in the January 1990 Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, *published by Sage Publications in Newbury Park, California. Hopper, a professor of sociology at the University of Mississippi, and Moore, a former president of the Satan's Dead motorcycle club and now a food-services worker at the university, found that "although earlier biker women were simply partners in parties and hedonistic sexuality, in modern outlaw gangs, women are expected to be engaged in economic pursuits for their individual men and sometimes for the entire club."*

METHODS

The data we present were gathered through participant observation and interviews with outlaw bikers and their female associates over a period of seventeen years. During the course of our research, we have attended biker parties, weddings, funerals, and other functions in which outlaw clubs were involved. In addition, we have visited in gang clubhouses, gone on "runs," and enjoyed cookouts with several outlaw organizations.

Most of our research was done on weekends because of our work schedules and because the gangs were more active at this time. The bikers usually had a large party one weekend a month, or more often when the weather was nice, and we were invited to many of these.

DILEMMAS OF BIKER RESEARCH

Studying bikers was a conflicted experience for us. It was almost impossible to keep from admiring their commitment, freedom, boldness, and fearlessness; at the same time, we saw things that caused us discomfort and consternation. Bikers' actions are sometimes bizarre. We saw bikers do things completely foreign to our personal values. Although we did not condone these activities, we did not express our objections for two reasons. First, we would not have been able to continue with our study. Second, it was too dangerous to take issue with outlaws on their own turf.

Studying bikers was a risky undertaking for us, even without criticizing them. At times when we were not expecting any problems, conditions became hazardous. One morning in Jackson, Tennessee, for example, we walked into an area where bikers had camped out all night. Half asleep and hung over, several of them jumped up and pulled guns on us because they thought we might be members of a rival gang that had killed five of their "brothers" several years earlier. If Grubby, a biker who recognized us from previous encounters, had not interceded on our behalf, we could have been killed or seriously injured.

Bikers would not humor many questions, and they did not condone uninvited comments. Even seemingly insignificant remarks sometimes caused a problem. In Biloxi on one occasion, we had an appointment to visit a biker clubhouse late on a Saturday afternoon. When we were admitted into the main room of the building, several men sat in front of a television set watching a wrestling match.

Because we looked upon professional wrestling as a humorous sham, one of us made a light reference to it. Immediately the bikers became tense and angry; it was clear that another sarcastic comment would have resulted in our being literally thrown out of the clubhouse. In this way, we accidentally learned that some bikers take television wrestling seriously. It would have been a bad mistake to have questioned them about their reasons for liking this dubious sport.

Both male and female bikers worship the Harley-Davidson motorcycle. One Mississippi group that we studied extensively had an old flathead "Hog" mounted on a high tree stump at the entrance to their clubhouse. When going in or out, members bowed to the old Harley or saluted it as an icon of the highest order. They

DO WE REALLY KNOW RISK WHEN WE SEE IT?

OUR PERCEPTIONS of risk affect where we live, where we work, even what we eat and drink. But how do we really know what is risky?

One way to judge risk is with probabilities. For example, the odds you'll be struck by lightning in the next hour are one in 600,000.

But most of us judge risk in a slightly less scientific manner. We see a news report about a fatal plane crash. So we worry about our next flight. Yet, in 1989, out of 7,625,000 commercial flights in the U.S., there were only 11 fatal crashes killing 278 people. Meanwhile, almost 50,000 people died from a form of travel few of us fear, the car.



We are living longer and healthier lives than ever before. Yet, from airplane accidents to reports of "poisonous" apples, it seems we face new dangers every day. Are we the safest people ever, or are we the most at risk?

Why? One theory is that we feel safer when we're in control. In a plane we are mere passengers. But in a car we're behind the wheel. We tend to forget the uncontrollable elements that make driving so dangerous—other drivers may be inexperienced, tired or even drunk.

Perceptions of risk like this affect the decisions we make not just as individuals but also as a society. From earthquakes to pesticides on our foods, do the things we worry about really pose a bigger risk to our safety than the things we don't worry about?

This question and others are the subject of a new PBS special called "Living Against the Odds." A program hosted by Richard Lewis, and produced by the WGBH Science Unit in association with the World Wildlife Fund, and brought to you by the people of Chevron.

Tune in Wednesday, April 3 at 8:00 pm. Check your local listings for show times on PBS.

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took it very seriously. Had we not shown respect for their obeisance, our relationship would have been terminated, probably in a violent manner.

Perhaps because society gives them so little respect, the bikers we studied insisted on being treated with deference. They gave few invitations to nonmembers, and they were affronted when something they offered was refused. Our respondents loved to party, and they did not understand anyone who did not. Once we were invited to a party by a man named Cottonmouth. The party was to begin at 9:00 P.M. on a Sunday night. When we told Cottonmouth that we had to leave at 7:00 P.M. to get back home, we lost his goodwill and respect entirely. He could not comprehend how we could let anything take precedence over a "righteous" club party.

Studying outlaw cyclists became more difficult rather than easier over the course of our study. They grew increasingly concerned about being investigated by undercover agents. At times, over the last years of our study, respondents whom we had known for months would suddenly accuse us of being undercover "pigs" when we seemed overly curious about their activities.

Our study required a firm commitment to research goals. We believed it was important to study biker women, and we did so in the only way open to us—on the terms of the bikers themselves. We were field observers rather than critics or reformers, even when witnessing things that caused us anguish.

[Essay]

DEBATE THE CANON IN CLASS

From "Other Voices, Other Rooms: Organizing and Teaching the Humanities Conflict," by Gerald Graff, in the Autumn 1990 issue of New Literary History, *a quarterly journal published by the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Graff is the author of* Professing Literature: An Institutional History. *He teaches at Northwestern University.*

In the faculty lounge the other day, a dispute arose between a couple of my colleagues that typifies the warfare currently agitating the educational world. It began when one of our older male professors complained that he had just come from teaching Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" and had been appalled to discover that the poem was virtually incomprehensible to his class. Why, can you believe it, said the older male professor (let us call him OMP for short), my students were at a loss as to what to make of Arnold's famous concluding lines, which he proceeded to recite with slightly self-mocking grandiloquence:

> Ah, love, let us be true
> To one another! for the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

My other colleague, a young woman who has just recently joined our department (let us call her YFP), replied that she could appreciate the students' reaction. She recalled that she had been forced to study "Dover Beach" in high school and had consequently formed a dislike for poetry that had taken her years to overcome. Why teach "Dover Beach" anyway? YFP asked.

Furiously stirring his Coffee-mate, OMP replied that in *his* humble opinion—reactionary though he supposed it now was—"Dover Beach" was one of the great masterpieces of the Western tradition, a work that, until recently at least, every seriously educated person took for granted as part of the cultural heritage. YFP retorted that while that might be so, it was not altogether to the credit of the cultural heritage. Take those lines addressed to the woman by the speaker, she said: "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another . . . ," and so on. In other words, protect and console me, my dear—as we know it's the function of your naturally more spiritual sex to do—from the "struggle and flight" of politics and history that we men have regrettably been assigned the unpleasant duty of dealing with. YFP added that she would have a hard time finding a better example of what feminists mean when they speak of the ideological construction of the feminine as by nature private and domestic and therefore justly disqualified from sharing male power. Here, however, she paused and corrected herself: "Actually," she said, "we *should* teach 'Dover Beach.' We should teach it as the example of phallocentric discourse that it is."

OMP responded that YFP seemed to be treating "Dover Beach" as if it were a piece of political propaganda rather than a work of art. To take Arnold's poem as if it were a species of "phallocentric discourse," whatever that is, misses the whole point of poetry, OMP said, which is to rise above such local and transitory problems by transmuting them into universal structures of language and image. Arnold's poem is no more about gender politics, declared OMP, than *Macbeth* is about the Stuart monar-

chical succession.

But *Macbeth is* about the Stuart monarchical succession, retorted YFP—or so its original audience may well have thought. It's about gender politics too—why else does Lady Macbeth need to "unsex" herself before she can participate in murdering Duncan? Not to mention all the business about men born of woman and from their mother's womb untimely ripped. The fact is, Professor OMP, that what you presume to be the universal human experience in Arnold and Shakespeare is male experience presented as if it were universal. You don't need to notice the politics of sexuality because for you patriarchy is the normal state of affairs. You can afford to ignore the sexual politics of literature, or to "transmute" them, as you put it, onto a universal plane, but that's a luxury I don't enjoy.

There are many possible ways to describe what happened here, but one of them would be to say that "theory" had broken out. What we have come to call "theory," I would suggest, is the kind of reflective discourse about practices that is generated when a consensus that was once taken for granted in a community breaks down. When this happens, assumptions that previously had gone without saying as the "normal state of affairs"—in this case OMP's assumption that literature is above sexual politics—have to be explicitly formulated and argued about.

OMP would probably complain that this trend diverts attention from literature itself. But YFP could reply that literature itself was not being ignored in their debate but discussed in a new way. It was not that she and OMP stopped talking about poetry and started talking theory. It was rather that, because their conflicting theoretical assumptions differed about how to talk about poetry, they had to talk about it in a way that highlighted those theories.

The recent prominence of theory, then, is the result of a climate of radical disagreement, and the complaint that theory is pervasive finally reduces to the complaint that literature and criticism have become too controversial. Yet the complaint only has the effect of generating more theory and more of the theoretical disagreement being deplored. Forced by the disagreement to articulate his principles, OMP, the traditional humanist, was "doing theory" just as much as was YFP, articulating assumptions that previously he could have taken as given. For this reason, the belief that the theory trend is a mere passing fad is likely to be wishful thinking.

The question is: Who and what are hurt by this situation? Who and what are damaged by conflicts like the one in the faculty lounge? The obvious answer would seem to be "Dover Beach." But just how well was "Dover Beach" doing in college (and high school) literature classes before radical teachers like YFP came along? We need only look at the complaint by

[Guidelines]

SLOW TIMES AT AMHERST HIGH

From "Policy on Sexual Harassment of Students," in the student handbook distributed last fall at Amherst Regional High School in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Definition: Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention from anyone with whom the victim may interact in the course of receiving her/his education in school or at school-sponsored activities.

The following behaviors from a peer are considered sexual harassment:

Staring or leering with sexual overtones
Spreading sexual gossip
Unwanted sexual comments
Pressure for sexual activity
Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature.

If you believe that you have been sexually harassed by another student or if you have questions about this issue, seek the help of an adult whom you trust, such as a teacher, guidance counselor, your parent/guardian, the dean of students, or an administrator. Any accusation of sexual harassment will be investigated by the dean of students, and a written record of the investigation will be filed with the principal.

If it is determined that a student has sexually harassed another student, the possible consequences for the offender are:

Parent conference
Apology to the victim
Detention
Suspension
Recommendation for expulsion from school
Referral to police.

Reprisals, threats, or intimidation of the victim will be treated as serious offenses that could result in expulsion. In every case, a high degree of confidentiality will be maintained to protect both the victim and the offender. All efforts will be made to preserve the victim's sense of control in the situation.

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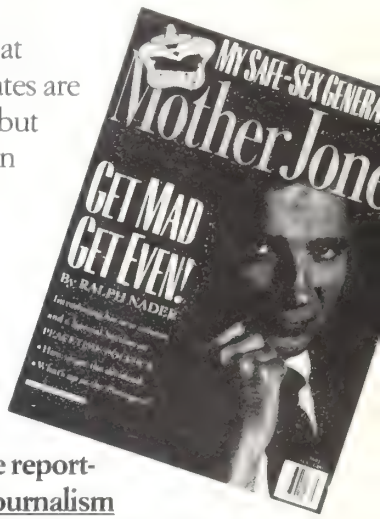
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This altered photograph of Manet's Déjeuner sur l'Herbe *is part of a series by Kathy Grove. Using airbrush and other retouching techniques, Grove removes the female figures from famous paintings in order to make images "portraying women as they have been throughout history: invisible." In Grove's versions, "women are given the chance to symbolically take control of the decision to participate." Grove's work will be exhibited from June 8 through July 13 at the Woodstock Center for Photography in Woodstock, New York.*

OMP that triggered the lounge debate to be reminded that such classics have often inspired deep apathy in students even when taught in the most reverential fashion—perhaps especially when taught in that fashion.

Considered in this light, one might argue that "Dover Beach" has little to lose from the debate between OMP and YFP and a good deal to gain. In an odd way, YFP is doing "Dover Beach" a favor: In treating Arnold's poem as a significant instance of ideological mystification, her critique does more to make the poem *a live issue* in the culture again than does the respectful treatment of traditionalist teachers like OMP, which, as he himself complains, fails to arouse his class.

What the debate between OMP and YFP really threatens is not "Dover Beach," I think, but OMP's conception of "Dover Beach" as a repository of universal values that transcend the circumstances of its creation and reception. Whereas this decontextualized concept of culture was once axiomatic in humanistic education, it has now become one theory among others, a proposition that has to be argued for rather than taken as given. What is threatened by the canon controversy, in other words, is not the classics but their unquestioned status. But again, when the classics enjoyed that unquestioned status there is little evidence that it made them seem more compelling to students than they seem now. In short, from an educational point of view, the classics have less to fear from newfangled ideological hostility than from old-fashioned indifference.

What is most unfortunate about the conflict between OMP and YFP is not *that* it is taking place but *where* it is taking place, behind the educational scenes where students cannot learn anything from it. My thought as I watched OMP and YFP go back and forth in the faculty lounge was that if OMP's students could witness this debate they would be more likely to get worked up over "Dover Beach" than they are now. They might even find it easier to gain access to the poem, for the controversy over it might give them a context for reading it that they do not now possess.

Then again, it might not. The controversy would have to be presented in a way that avoids pedantry, obscurity, and technicality, and this

is difficult to do. And even when it is done, many students will still have as much trouble seeing why they should take an interest in critical debates over "Dover Beach" as they do seeing why they should take an interest in "Dover Beach" itself. The alienation of students from academic culture runs deep, and it may deepen further as the terms of that culture become more confusingly in dispute than in the past.

In such a situation, helping students gain access to academic discourse means clarifying conflicts like the one between OMP and YFP (and numerous others not so neatly polarized). If the goal is to help students become interested participants in the present cultural conversation instead of puzzled and alienated spectators, the aim should be to *organize* such conflicts of principle in the curriculum itself. They are, after all, only an extension of the real-life conflicts that students experience every day.

Just opening reading lists to noncanonical works—necessary as that step is—will not in itself solve the problem. Replacing "Dover Beach" with *The Color Purple* does not necessarily help the student who has difficulty with the intellectual vocabularies in which both texts are discussed in the academic environment. What makes reading and interpretation difficult for many students is not the kind of text being read, whether canonical or noncanonical, highbrow or popular, but the heavily thematic and symbolic ways in which all texts, irrespective of status, are discussed in the academic setting. (The student phrase for it is "looking for 'hidden meaning.'") If the practice of looking for hidden meaning seems strange to you, it will seem no less strange to look for it in *The Color Purple* than in *Hamlet*.

This last point needs underscoring, because educational progressives have been too quick to blame student alienation from academic literacy on the elitist or conservative aspects of that literacy. But students can be as alienated from democratized forms of academic literacy as from conservative forms. What alienates these students is academic literacy *as such*, with its unavoidably abstract and analytical ways of talking and writing, regardless of whether that literacy is traditional or populist.

There is no question of occupying a neutral position here: In my view, the shift from the traditionalist to the revisionist view of culture is very much a change for the better. But from the vantage point of students who feel estranged from the intellectual life as such, revisionist culture can easily seem like the same old stuff in a new guise. To such students a feminist theorist and an Allan Bloom would seem far more similar to each other than to people like themselves, their parents, and friends. In the students' eyes, the feminist and Bloom would be just a couple of intellectuals speaking a very different language from their own about problems the students have a hard time recognizing as problems.

The new climate of ideological contention in the university seems to me a sign of democratic vitality rather than the symptom of "disarray," relativism, and declining standards that the critics on the Right take it to be. But so far the university *has* failed to make a focused curriculum out of its contentiousness. For this reason, it is failing to tap its full potential for drawing students into its culture.

The best way to do this is to make the conflicts themselves part of the object of study. There are worse things that could happen to literature than having a passionate controversy erupt over it.

[Tracking Guide]

WHERE THE TAXICABS ROAM

From the "Montana Broke Tracking Guide," a leaflet that accompanies every pair of Montana Broke jeans, which are guaranteed to have been "worn by bronc riders, ropers, ranchers, and hands residing in the state of Montana." These second-hand jeans sell for up to $65 at clothing stores in San Francisco and New York City; they are provided to retailers by Judy McFarlane of Manhattan, Montana, who purchases them directly from their original owners for five dollars apiece.

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L-shaped rips and various gouges: Barbed wire fences are especially tough on jeans, as are worn-out pickup seats, bull chutes, and brush.

Frayed hems: In order for the pants to be long enough when seated on a horse, the cowboy wears 'em a tad too long for walking. They skim the ground when he walks, fraying the hem in the back only.

Well-worn area on upper leg: Stacking and carrying baled hay puts lots of wear on the knees and fronts of pants. The denim can become paper-thin.

Holes in the knees: From ranch work to rodeos, breaking horses to mending fences, these jeans have seen it all! A hailed-out knee on one leg or the other goes with the territory.

Why reforming our liab
America is to succeed

Excessive liability awards make it tough for U.S. companies to compete.

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Paying a hidden tax.

In reality, the American system of liability has become the source of a hidden tax on our economy—a tax that can account for as much as 50% of the price paid for a product.

What's worse, it has been estimated that this hidden tax amounts to $80 billion a year—a sum equal to the combined profits of the nation's 200 largest corporations.

Our economic competitors' legal systems do not encourage litigation to the extent we do. Consider, for example, that there are 30 times more lawsuits per capita in the U.S. than in Japan.

Is it any wonder that America is having a tough time competing in overseas markets?

Uncertainty stifles enterprise.

The unpredictability of our liability system is also enormously costly to American competitiveness. For example, in a recent survey of CEOs, the Conference Board found that worry about potential liability lawsuits caused 47% of firms surveyed to discontinue one or more product lines. What's more, 25% stopped certain product research and development, and 39% decided



against coming out with a new product. Meanwhile, our overseas competitors continue to research and develop new products at an ever-increasing pace.

Are we controlling risks or increasing them?

When we give a drunk driver the right to sue an automaker or highway engineer for a million dollars after a crash, are we controlling risk?

Or just encouraging risky and careless behavior?

If you are a manufacturer, you can be sued even if your product has state-of-the-art safety features. Even if your customer misused it against your instructions. Even if the risks of misuse were obvious.

When fear of lawsuits causes physicians to limit

ity system is essential if n overseas markets.

services to patients—or worse, to abandon their practice altogether—lack of adequate treatment means greater risks for everyone.

Is this controlling risk or increasing it?

It's an unhealthy and dangerous situation that needs correcting.

We must reform our "deep pockets" approach to liability.

Specifically, we need to change our approach and base liability suits on fault.

Our current system often encourages the frivolous suing of those with the ability to pay—in other words, those with "deep pockets." But does it make sense to hold such parties entirely liable, even if they were only minimally at fault?

A more rational approach.

Those who suffer economic losses because of another's negligence should be fairly reimbursed. No one could argue with this principle. There should also be just compensation for pain and suffering resulting from real and severe injuries.

But can we afford to continue a system that encourages litigation and financial judgments bearing little direct relationship to fault or to the actual cost of injuries suffered?

Clearly, a better approach is needed.

Congress has a role.

Legislation providing a uniform product liability standard would allow American companies to compete without the burdens of excessive liability risks. And this would unclog the courts and put American business in a stronger position as barriers to international trade and investment fall.

There is proposed legislation before Congress dealing with these issues. A solution to the liability crisis is vital to American competitiveness, and Congress can play a role in restoring the right balance.

So do the courts.

When all is said and done, our courts are the interpreters of our laws and our values. It's our values as a society that count, especially as reflected in the courts and individual jury decisions.

Together our legislative and judicial branches must recognize the damage being done to American competitiveness from the current liability system. And help America restore the proper balance.

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Well-worn seat only: This individual probably spent a lot of time riding horses and wore leather chaps to protect his legs.

Round worn spot on one back pocket: Unmistakably a can of chewing tobacco.

Oil-base stains in various colors: Small paint sticks are used for marking sick calves. Iodine, scarlet oil, purple spray, and leather oil are also used . . . and spilled.

Worn and ragged area on inside of leg below the knee: Farriers and cowboys alike are familiar with the rough edges of horseshoe nails. The farrier positions the horse's hoof for examination by cradling the horse's leg between his calves. The nails holding the horseshoe in place slide back and forth against his jeans, leaving an unmistakable worn patch.

Pants without the tag in back: When a group of cowboys and cowgirls get together to dance and have a bit of fun, cowgirls make a sport of tearing the tag off of an unsuspecting guy's pants. If she's particularly amorous, she uses her teeth.

[Memoir]

MALE BONDING: AN UPDATE?

From "Claiming the Spear in the Nuclear Age," by Tom Daly, in the December 1990–March 1991 issue of Wingspan, *the "Journal of the Male Spirit," published in Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts. Daly is the director of The Men's Council Project in Boulder, Colorado, which offers "wilderness encampments" and "midlife initiations" for men.*

A cold steel bar in the palm of my hand. It sends shivers up my arm and down my back. In my mind's eye I see a vast plain dotted by tufts of grass and small bushes stretching to the horizon in all directions. The other men in my clan and I look to the earth for tracks, some sign of game. I grip my spear, its shaft resting on the earth. I look up to see my spear point reflecting the rays of the early morning sun.

The daydream fades. I begin hammering on the steel bar, thinning and drawing out a recognizable shape. For hours six of us hammer and file our bars into spear points, each magnetized by some inner vision or feeling.

My council brothers and I have come together this weekend to be about the business of spear making. We have come to discover what the spear means to us personally and mythically. As an ancient and vital symbol in the male psyche, the spear stirs something in all of us. At this moment the spear represents only a connection to that inner image of myself on the great plain. It can be used to kill or to defend.

What am I hunting? What do I have to defend against? I may never have final answers to these questions, yet here today, sitting around the campfire with my brothers, I know we are about some sacred business. I love the shape of this point I'm making. It isn't quite as long as the one I had dreamed of. One of my first lessons is that this particular iron bar couldn't be stretched any longer without breaking or becoming too weak to be useful. The second lesson I learn the hard way. Running my finger lightly along the edge, I am shocked as I draw my blood. The edges are amazingly sharp. There is no doubt that I've made a deadly weapon.

Talking as we work, the conversation goes to the subject of male lineage and fathers and grandfathers and distant elders. We complete this part of our work by naming our male ancestors. All this hammering has pounded more masculine energy into me. It's as though the souls of my ancestors are speaking to me through my hands and bones.

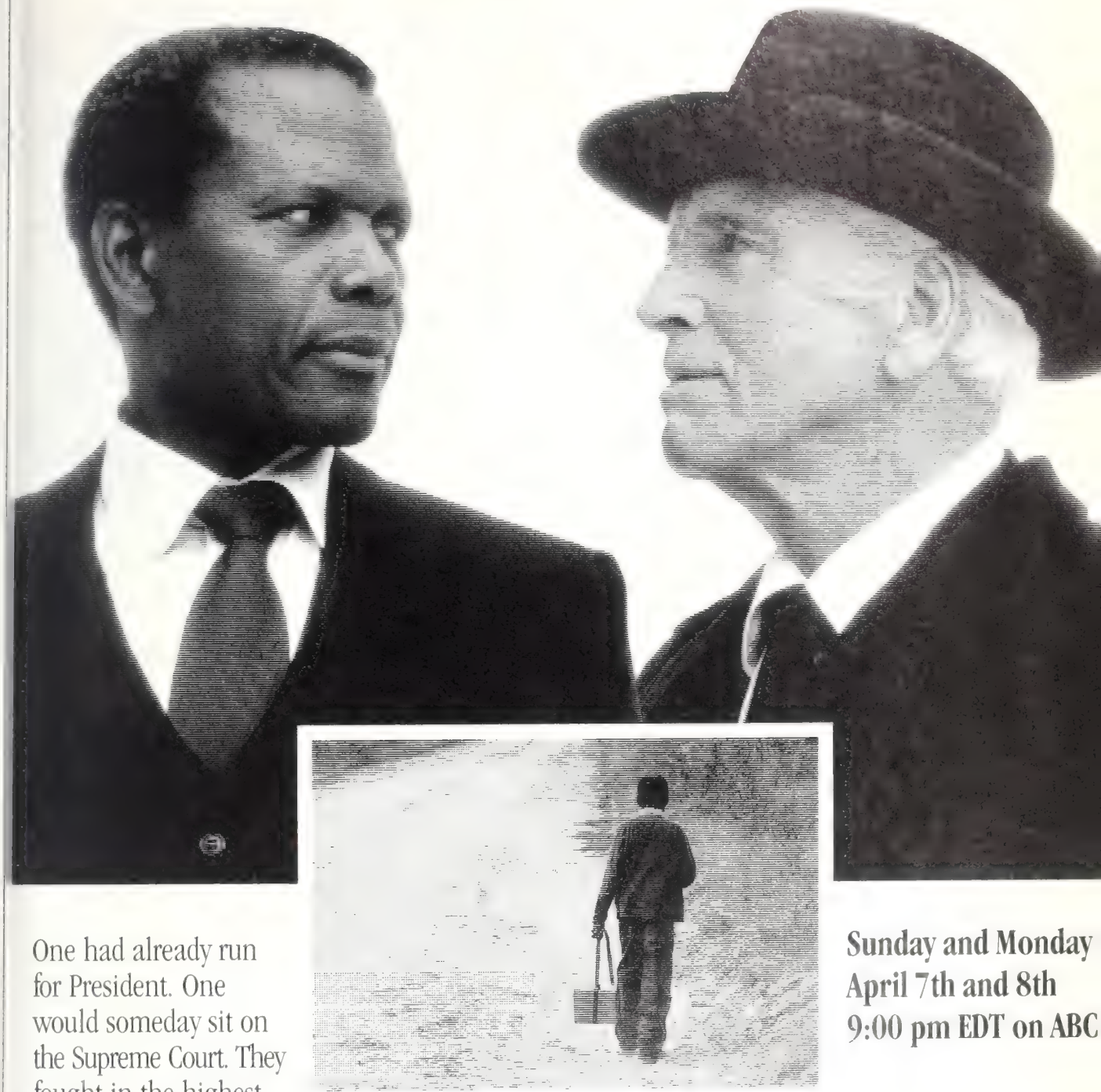
Next we build a great sweat fire, and after it has burned down to white-hot, we put in our newly made blades. They will be tempered along with us. After several hours in the sweat lodge, our new bodies and blades are ready to go into the creek to be quenched. The steam rises up to the gods who watch over spear making, and to our forefathers. We ask for their blessings. That night I dream of tribesmen going on hunting parties.

At first light we go our separate ways through the snowy hills to find the living trees that will become our spear shafts. We are instructed to take the shaft from the tree with a single blow of the ax.

I sit and feel my heart, my belly. I'm going to kill a tree. I have to do this consciously. I want all of myself here for this. I make a 360-degree turn, look up and down, and ask who among these trees is willing to die for me. As I refocus my eyes, I look right at a small aspen in the middle of a tight grove. It seems impossible to get at and yet it seems to be calling. I position myself as well as possible between two other trees and, without thinking, bring it down with a clean cut. I give thanks to my new companion in spirit and spend the next twenty minutes carefully trimming off the top and bark.

Over the months that followed we all painstakingly mounted our spear points and decorated the shafts. For me the process became something of a romance. For a while, I took my spear jogging with me in the park. I know that

Separate But Equal



One had already run for President. One would someday sit on the Supreme Court. They fought in the highest court in the land, pitted against one another over the education of a single black schoolboy. And the result is still being felt today.

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sounds absurdly naive, but I truly felt everyone would know I meant no harm. They didn't. I came to realize that the spear, even in this day and age, has a fearful significance at many levels.

Many times since then I have danced with it, held it for hours, introduced it to certain friends, and even slept with it when I needed to be in touch with a deeper part of myself.

I have used it in ceremony. I have taken it into the dragon's lair. I have cast it into the void. It has been a teacher, and from it I learned how to cut connections with people when I have to. I've learned to defend my inner children and my brothers when they need protection. Much more importantly, I am beginning to get a sense of what I don't know and the great mystery it connects me to. I am learning the significance of being a spear-carrier.

[Dramatic Monologue]

THE FEVER

From The Fever, *a narrative piece by Wallace Shawn, to be published this month by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. During the past year, Shawn has performed* The Fever *in theaters and private homes; this month he will perform it at New York City's Lincoln Center. Shawn is the author of several plays, including* Aunt Dan and Lemon, *and the co-author and co-star of the film* My Dinner with André.

I'm traveling—and I wake up suddenly in the silence before dawn in a strange hotel room, in a poor country where my language isn't spoken, and I'm shaking and shivering. Why? There's something—something is happening—far away, in a different country. Yes, I remember. It's the execution. The newspaper article said this would be the hour, this was the date.

I catch my breath. And so now they come—they come for the man who lies on his cot, the catlike man whose face is so large, so black, that the guards who open his cell are once again frightened, shaken. They shave his head, a section of his leg, so the electrodes will fit closely on the skin.

And now the guards lead him into the chamber, and he's tied into the chair with leather straps. His arms are strapped down to armrests so the witnesses won't see them move, his legs strapped to the legs of the chair. Does panic mount in the man's heart? An attendant covers his head with a hood so none of us will see his pain, the horror, the distortion of his face. The breaking of the skin! All we see is the body shifting upward slightly in the chair.

Don't you think—when you're traveling in a strange country—that the smells are sharp and upsetting? And when you wake up in the middle of the night—unexpectedly—when you wake up at an odd hour—when you're traveling somewhere and you wake up in a strange place—don't you feel frightened?

I can't stop shivering.

The lamp by my bed doesn't work, the electric lights won't turn on. The rebels have blown up the electricity towers. There's a small war going on in this poor country where my language isn't spoken. The hotel rooms all have candles with little candle holders. I get up, light the candle, take the candle into the bathroom. Then I put the candle in its holder on the floor, and I kneel down in front of the toilet and vomit. Then I'm sitting, shivering, on the bathroom floor, this cold square of tile on a hot night in a hot country, and I can't stand up to go back to bed—I can't stand up—so I sit there quietly, shaking as if I were sitting in the snow. And in the corner of the bathroom—brown against the tile—there's an insect, big, like a water bug—it's flat, heavy—very tough legs, they look like metal—and it's waiting, squatting, deciding which way to move—and in a second it's crossed behind the sink, and it's slipping itself into a hole too small for it to fit in, but it fits—in—it fits—it's gone. And I see myself. I see myself. A moment of insight.

It's the birthday party in the fancy restaurant. Yes—there's the table with its sweet and pretty decorations, the fanciful centerpiece, pink and green, and there are all the women in bright red lipstick and the men in beautiful shirts, and all the gifts—outrageous, unexpected, and funny gifts—and there are the waiters serving the salmon and pouring the wine, and there I am. I'm talking quietly with that small, pale woman in the red and blue dress about the love affair with the older man, that film that disturbed her, the actress, the psychiatrist, the criminals, the walks at night through the woods in the country, the insatiable appetite for violent sex, the suffering of the people who live in desperation in the crowded shelter across the street from the fancy restaurant. And as I talked with that woman in the red and blue dress, I thought I was a person who was thinking about a party, who had so many complicated feelings about it, who liked some aspects of the party but not others, who liked some of the people but not all of them, who liked the pink and green centerpiece but didn't really like that red and blue dress. But no. No. I see it so clearly. I see myself with my little fork—I wasn't a person who was thinking about a party. I was a person who was *at* a party,

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who sat at the table, drank the wine, and ate the fish.

We didn't talk about the fish, we didn't talk about the restaurant, we talked about the lakes in the mountains in the north of Thailand and the crowded shelter across the street. But where were we? Where were we? Not by the lakes, not in the shelter—we were there, just there, at that table, in that restaurant.

Maybe for certain people—maybe for certain people who lived at the beginning of the twentieth century—what was hidden and unconscious was the inner life. Maybe the only thing those people could see was the outward circumstance, where they were, what they did, and they had no idea at all of what was inside them. But something's been hidden from me too. Something—a part of myself—has been hidden from me, and I think it's the part that's there on the surface, what anyone in the world could see about me if they saw me out the window of a passing train.

Because I know quite a bit about what's inside me. I've been a student of my feelings since I was nine years old! The incredible history of my feelings and thoughts could fill up a dozen leather-bound books. But the story of my life—my behavior, my actions—that's a slim volume, and I've never read it. I've never wanted to. I've always thought it would be terribly boring. What would be in it? Chapter One: My Childhood. I was born, I cried. Chapter Two: The Rest. I maintained myself. I got up, I went to work, I went home, I went to bed. I went to a restaurant, and I ate fish. Who cares? For God's sake—did I have to travel to a poor country where no books are printed in my own language—did I have to be cast down onto a bathroom floor in a strange hotel—in order to finally be forced to open that dull volume, the story of my life?

And I vomit again.

No, I'm not going to read it. I won't read it. My parents loved me. They raised me to think about people, the world, humanity, beauty—not to think about restaurants and fish. I was born into the mind. Lamplight. The warm living room. My father, in an armchair, reading about China. My mother with the newspaper on a long sofa. Orange juice on a table in a glass pitcher.

And they read me a book about all the people in so many different uniforms who came to our house to help our family—coming from every corner of our beautiful city, the delivery man from the grocery store, the mailman with the mail. All so kind. And down the street, the old woman who worked in the bakery, who bent down and gave me sugar-covered buns. And dear God, I never doubted that life was precious. I've always thought life should be *celebrated.*

Today I went to an office, a quiet office—a few cabinets and chairs—and its job was to make a record of all the cases of political murder, and torture, and rape—rape used as a form of torture or in the course of torture. There were photographs on the walls of the bleeding corpses of friends. The blood was bright red. One was a schoolteacher, killed near her school. And there were black-and-white snapshots of shyly smiling women and men at some time before their deaths, and these were pinned up next to the pictures of their corpses. The faces, radiant with goodness.

And I thought of the delicacy with which my parents had taught me to urinate into the toilet, to be careful around toilet seats, to wash my hands, always with soap, to avoid people with the flu, with colds, to avoid drafts, to avoid rooms that were cold or wet.

And I thought of how they'd taught me to love traveling—the wonderful train trips. The magic of riding at night through the farmland in our little compartment, brushing our teeth on the moving train.

And here, from my spot on the bathroom floor, I can see through the window, gorgeous in the moonlight, the gorgeous mountains of the poor country, soaked with the blood of the innocent, soaked with the blood of those shy faces, battered shy faces.

Walking through a garden with my mother—enormous roses. And through a dark pine forest—my father pointing to a yellow bird. Save me.

You see, *I* like Beethoven. *I* like to hear the bow of the violin *cut* into the string. *I* like to follow the phrase of the violin as it goes on and on, like a deep-rooted orgasm squeezed out into a rope of sound. *I* like to go out at night in a cosmopolitan city and sit in a dark auditorium watching dancers fly into each other's arms.

Yes, suppose that certain people—certain people whose hearts admittedly are filled with love—*are* being awakened suddenly at night by groups of armed men. Suppose that they *are* being dragged into a stinking van with a carpet on the floor and stomped by boots till their lips are swollen like oranges, streaming with blood. Yes, I was alive when those things were done, I lived in the town whose streets ran with the blood of good-hearted victims, I wore the clothes that were pulled from the bodies of victims when they were raped and killed.

But I love the violin. I love the music, the dancers, everything I touch, everything I see. The city with its lights, the theaters, coffee shops, newsstands, books. The constant celebration . . . ■

DARK CONTINENT

A grand, grim tour of the New Europe

By Walter Russell Mead

Tbilisi, the capital city of Soviet Georgia, lies northeast of Turkey, much closer geographically to Iran than to any country in the West, at the far edge of what we have come to think of in the past few years as the New Europe. I arrived there one afternoon late last summer, and among the first people I met were several Soviet second lieutenants who approached me on the street. It took a while, given the state of my Russian and their English, but they finally got their message across: They had a petition they wanted me to take to the United Nations. These young men wanted out of the Soviet Army; they wanted no part of Moscow's plans to maintain order in the rebellious Transcaucasian republics. I explained as best I could that I had little clout at the UN.

The following day I walked to the Georgian parliament, where there was a separatist sit-in under way. The protesters, youngish bearded university professors and their students in jeans, looked *echt* European: This might have been a demonstration at the Sorbonne. And the goals and ideals of the demonstrators were those at the heart of the New Europe: human rights, democracy, freedom.

Later, a few of the protesters—a poet, an archaeologist, a medieval historian—took me to the home of another couple, two academics in their thirties. Everyone spoke four or five languages; in English, French, and German we talked literature and politics. We listened to Paul Simon's *Graceland* on an imported boom box, a treasured possession. The idea of the New Europe is rooted perhaps more than anything else in such possessions—in the belief that getting and spending in a pan-European consumer society will act as a kind of lubricant, reducing age-old frictions and cooling the continent's many all-too-heated passions.

It wasn't until quite late that night that my host and his friends began showing me their newest treasured possessions: black-market handguns that they had acquired and were now learning to use. "How much would

Walter Russell Mead is the author of Mortal Splendor: The American Empire in Transition. *With this essay he joins* Harper's Magazine *as a contributing editor. He will be writing several times a year on international relations and political economy.*

IN PRAGUE I MET HIGH SCHOOL HONORS STUDENTS CARRYING SWITCHBLADES TO USE ON THE GYPSIES. EUROPE'S TROUBLES ARE NOT OVER

this cost in Istanbul?" the poet asked me.

I had no idea. "Why do you need these?" I asked.

"In case of trouble," the poet said darkly.

"From whom?"

"The Abkhazian menace."

The Abkhazians are an ethnic minority in Georgia; they are less than enthusiastic about the majority's plan for an independent Georgian republic. Abkhazians and Georgians fought for centuries before the imposition of centralized Soviet rule. Tempers were running high last summer, with both groups arming. In South Ossetia, another minority enclave in Georgia, tension had already led to bloody confrontations—and such confrontations are still going on.

"We don't want trouble here," the medieval historian had explained. "We want Georgia to be peaceful and democratic: a normal European state." Democratic and peaceful—two very nice things, but there is nothing normal about them in European history. For a few brief months last year it looked as if peace and democracy were breaking out across Europe. Harmony in the West, where the member nations of the European Community were moving smoothly toward ever closer integration; democracy in Central Europe, where communist regimes were yielding, usually peacefully, to Western-style democrats; reform in the Kremlin, where Mikhail Gorbachev was forging something of a New Deal for Soviet citizens, attempting to create more democracy and greater prosperity.

Since those days, the outlook has darkened. Economic troubles dog not only the emerging democracies of Central Europe but also several nations of the industrialized West. Gorbachev looks less and less like the Franklin D. Roosevelt of Russia and more like a cross between its Nixon and its Hoover. The long winter of the Cold War has ended, but Europe's troubles are not over. Trees are budding, and the birds are starting to sing, but rivers swollen by melting snow threaten to flood their banks, and great wild beasts, their hibernation over, are emerging from their caves and rubbing their eyes. Last year I drove 20,000 miles around and across Europe, and everywhere I looked I saw old hatreds, old discords made new.

In Prague I met high school honors students carrying switchblades to use on the Gypsies. "They live like animals," said one of the students, the son of a Czech diplomat, as he demonstrated his blade. "By the year 2000 there will be more than a million of them in Czechoslovakia. I wish all the Gypsies were dead."

In Sarajevo, where Serbian nationalists set off the First World War by murdering an Austrian archduke, they were at it again. Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Bosnian Muslims appeared to be gearing up for a three-way civil war.

It's not just the East: In Hammerfest, Norway, a two-day drive above the Arctic Circle, where reindeer scampering up the slopes from the fjords could be glimpsed by the light of the midnight sun, I met a charming and cultivated elderly shopkeeper. Driven away in 1944 when the Germans burned Hammerfest to the ground, he still hates the Germans. But his big worry today isn't Germany: It's the Norwegian Muslims he's watched demonstrating on television. "We have too many of them," he said. "And they don't share our values."

Martial Bild, the youth director for Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front in Paris, made the same point about *his* country's minorities. I met Bild not long after the desecration of the Jewish cemetery at Carpentras, an act some attributed to followers of Le Pen and that Le Pen's deputies refused to condemn in the European Parliament. Bild tried to reassure me. It isn't the French Jews his movement wants to deport, he told me, only the "foreign ones" who came in from North Africa. They and the Arabs must go, must be rounded up and deported, if their country of origin will take them back. If not, Bild suggested, one can always build camps.

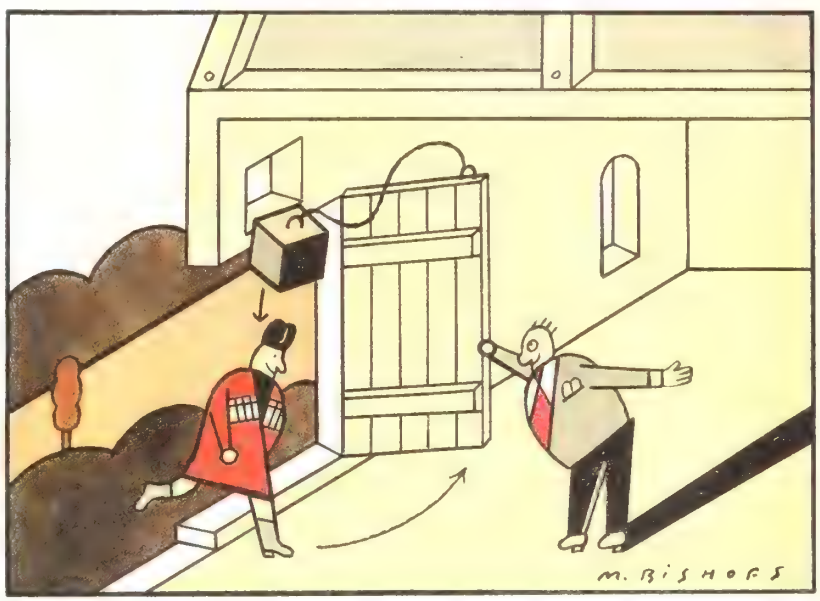
And on it went: In the shadows of modern skyscrapers, in front of TVs

airing CNN and Madonna videos, in the front seats of flashy cars, and over dinners in chic restaurants, seemingly "New European" Europeans turned my grand tour grim. I met Bulgarians vowing to fight the Turkish menace, and Turks who were still bitter—very bitter—about the Russian czars who swiped Central Asia. They want it back. There are Poles worried about the Germans, Germans filled with anti-Polish rage. There are plenty of people who think Europe would be a better place if their countries were just a little bit bigger. In some cities, people literally waved maps in my face showing the boundaries that their countries ought to have. There are Hungarians who want peace—and a piece of Romania. There are Romanians with their eyes on Moldavia.

Then there are all the people who hate each other too much to live in the same country. It's not just the Soviets and Yugoslavs who talk about breaking the ties that bind them. Thirty miles from Vienna, there are Slovaks who can't bear to live under the same flag as the Czechs. It's much the same thing—though not the same crisis just now—to the west: the Irish nationalists in the British Isles; the Basques in Spain. Too many "nations," too few states. Welcome to the oldest of Europes, seething dangerously beneath the New.

THERE ARE HUNGARIANS WHO WANT PEACE—AND A PIECE OF ROMANIA. THERE ARE ROMANIANS WITH THEIR EYES ON MOLDAVIA

The New Europe. It's a curiously old-fashioned and American, even Wilsonian, concept: the dream that a jaded old continent, so drenched in blood, so haunted by the ghosts of dead ideologies, can be renewed overnight—born again as a peaceful consumer society. The Gaul will lie down with the Teuton, the Russian with the Pole. Abkhazian and Georgian will live in harmony and none shall have a dark, chauvinist, violent thought. They'll simply shop.



The United States of Europe is the slogan, but the New Europeans have more than a monetary, or even a political, union in mind. The Dream of Europe, as it is spoken of, is truly one of history's greatest leaps of faith. It's the end of Europe as we have known it for millennia: the end of the old nations; the end of class struggle; the end of war; the end, in short, of history.

You can see glimmers of the dream in Brussels, home to the European Community's burgeoning bureaucracy and, in a sense, capital of the New Europe. Ideas and the call to history used to matter here. The rising guilds defied the feudal lords; Protestants stood up against the tyranny of Spain—and were burned and beheaded for their efforts. Belgium's King Albert made history in 1914 by his refusal of the German kaiser's request for free passage for his armies in their attack on France. "Belgium is a country," the king declared, "not a road."

Today it is more a shopping center than either. Belgium earnestly hopes that causes, good and bad, are a thing of the past. Brussels is full of tourists and shoppers; the old historic buildings of the central square have, by and large, been converted to restaurants and upscale boutiques. The House of the Swan, for example, is an expensive restaurant that was once a cheap tavern. It was in that cheap tavern that the young Marx and Engels used to repair of an evening, clutching the manuscript sheets of *The Communist Manifesto*, which they would read to their friends. Across the way from the Swan is a storefront that during the German occupation of Brussels in the Second World War served as the recruiting center for the SS. Now it is a Godiva outlet; people buy chocolate truffles where Belgian fascists once

Illustrations by Maris Bishofs

FRANCE BELIEVES THAT WITHIN THE COMMON MARKET IT CAN REIGN AS THE HEAD OF EUROPE: IT SEEKS INTEGRATION TO FURTHER NATIONAL INTERESTS, NOT FORGO THEM

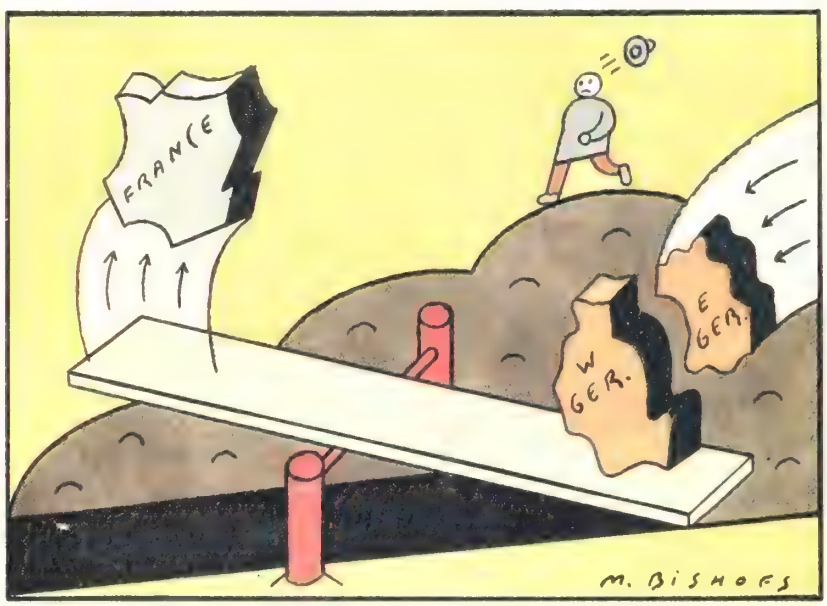
signed up for the Russian front.

This is the New Europe, then: communism and fascism over, no monuments to mark where they stood. Shopping, eating, catering to the self—a consumer utopia keeping at bay more cataclysmic ideologies. It's a yuppie version of the old Wobbly dream: One Big Mall.

The European Community was born of an historic postwar rapprochement between France and Germany, or at least its western half. In 1945 Franco-German reconciliation seemed miraculous; in the years that followed, the success and durability of that partnership gave all Europeans hope. If the Teuton and the Gaul could see eye to eye, then no animosity between two European peoples, nations, or states was invincible.

At Compiègne, in northeastern France, there is a monument to the old Franco-German relationship. This haunting spot, a clearing in a forest of brooding yews and oaks, is where the German generals signed the armistice terms in 1918 to end the First World War. "Here perished the criminal pride of the German Empire," a marker reads, "vanquished by the free peoples it sought to subdue." The railroad car in which the armistice was signed now serves as a museum, and not only for the First World War. In the very same car, in 1940, Hitler forced the French to accept defeat.

Eisenhower broke the pattern in 1945, receiving the German surrender in Reims. After the Second World War, the larger pattern of Franco-German hostility appeared to have been broken as well. During the 1950s West Germany and France forged what both sides hoped would be a new relationship, based on economic cooperation—cooperation that would improve the lives of French and German men and women alike. The two nations signed a coal and steel agreement in 1950, and it is this agreement that represented the first tentative step on the road to the Common Market (established in 1958) and the New Europe—the beginning, idealists believe, of a postnationalist era in Europe, a time in which nationalist passions would be felt, if at all, only at World Cup soccer matches.



This, sad to say, is not what the French had in mind: not now, not ever. France believed, and believes today, that within the Common Market it could reign as the political and cultural head of Europe, binding the finally defeated German foe securely to her chariot.

The twentieth century has not been kind to France. The terrible agony of the First World War bled the country white without yielding any lasting economic or political benefits. The 1930s was a dreadful time of irresolution and cowardice—and that decade was followed by the debacle of 1940, the year France fell to Hitler in six weeks. As a shattered French elite sought to patch together some strategy for a divided and embittered society in the Fifties, the European Community was one of the few viable options at hand. Bad as things were in France, they were worse in most other European countries. In the mid-1950s France was the strongest, most cohesive, most politically enterprising non-communist society on the European continent.

From the viewpoint of Paris, the new partnership with Germany was one in which La France, supreme in her political position in Europe and her veto in the UN—and later made secure by the possession of her own nuclear weapons—was very much the senior partner, graciously "sponsoring" a

divided and guilt-ridden West Germany. Even as West Germany grew richer than France in the 1960s and more potent in European politics a decade later, the French could console themselves with the reflection that the Community institutions would contain German power and integrate it into something more acceptable, more European—and more susceptible to French influence. Meanwhile, France could seek an independent role as Western Europe's interlocutor with the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Third World.

The Common Market, then, was a program to further France's national interests, not to forgo them. The bad news filtering in over the last two years is that the strategy failed. The year 1989 was supposed to be the Year of France: the bicentennial of the Revolution; the moment that would see the French program for 1992—a Europe without trade barriers, to be followed by monetary union and eventually political union—enshrined in European Community law, with France more secure than ever as the political center of Western Europe. Instead, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, and Germany reunified a year later, it turned out to be the first year in what looks to be a German Era.

The Soviet collapse, German reunification, and political developments flowing from these historic changes have come as a nasty shock to the French. Distinguished French commentators and political leaders speak of the collapse of France's postwar policy, of a crisis affecting its position in Europe, of the end of the Franco-German axis. Whether the issue is Gorbachev or Saddam Hussein, President François Mitterrand sits all night by the phone, but nobody calls.

The old "new Europe"—that of Adenauer and de Gaulle—posed no challenge to French nationalism. On the contrary, it salved its bruised ego. It gratified French vanity and cushioned France from the worst of the post-imperial blues suffered by, for example, the British. The new New Europe, which will require France to play altar boy to the German high priest, will not be easy to accept. Look for a new France that will be less constructive and much huffier as Germany waxes. Nationalist passions and jealousies, far from fading away in the 1990s, will likely play an increasing role once again.

LOOK FOR A NEW FRANCE THAT WILL BE LESS CONSTRUCTIVE AND MUCH HUFFIER AS GERMANY WAXES

West Germany, which has just disappeared, was a strange place by German standards. It was boring and rich—Greater Holland. Nothing ever happened there; the old Germany, tormented and brilliant, appeared to have vanished from the face of the earth.

Not so long ago, the Germans were the greatest and most dynamic nation in the world, creators of perhaps the finest culture since the days of ancient Greece. From the German-speaking lands came Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Schopenhauer, Freud, Nietzsche, Weber, Wittgenstein, Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Liszt, Schumann, Wagner, Barth, Jung, Mann . . . One thousand years from now, if the human race lasts that long, people will look back with awe upon this cultural flowering.

Today Germans are renowned for their automobiles and their machine tools. Like Belgium and Holland, like all Western Europe after the war only more so, Germany turned its back on the sublime. The nation of Goethe and Nietzsche decided to watch TV for a while.

The past, with its heights of glory and its abyss of crime—each on a scale unmatched by other nations—was too heavy a burden for a divided Germany. The Germans had lived on the volcano, had witnessed its eruptions and explosions, had seen the faces of God and the Devil high among its crags and swirling fogs; since 1945 they have sought refuge on the flats.

The postwar leadership of the shattered Reich consciously sought to turn Germany away from its old paths of glory and despair. The postwar entente with France was profoundly humiliating to German pride, but Germany was a humbled country in the Fifties. German statesmen bore patiently the constant posturing and boasting of French politicians, the references to

GERMANY'S INTERESTS IN WHAT WAS FORMERLY EAST GERMANY MEAN THAT IT WILL SET FOREIGN AND MONETARY POLICIES REGARDLESS OF THE VIEWS OF ITS WESTERN NEIGHBORS

French leadership, uniqueness, centrality—and bore patiently as well the demand that Germany underwrite the costs of constructing a new Europe an order.

In Germany, loyalty to Europe became a way both to escape nationalism and to affirm it. Europe offered an alternative identity at a time when it was uncomfortable to be German; by being ostentatiously more-European-than-thou, Germans could still serve their national pride. Today Germans continue to remind foreigners that they are the "most internationally minded" of the European countries, and frequently contrast their progressive and farsighted internationalism with the unfortunate and backward chauvinism of . . . France.

Reunification is making the question of German nationalism once again central to German life. Germany is too big to hide any longer behind Europe. The diplomatic run-up to reunification saw Chancellor Helmut Kohl put German interests clearly ahead of European cooperation for the first time since the war. Reunification and a new relationship with the Soviet Union were too important to Germany to allow its European allies more than a minor role. When Kohl and Gorbachev cut the final deal on reunification in Russia last summer, they were alone.

In international politics, the Germans will be taking a very different path from the French. Eastern Europe is collapsing; its economies are in turmoil, its governments in disarray. The possibility of civil war in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia—with millions of refugees crossing the borders in unrelenting waves—is very real to the Germans. There were Albanian Gypsies in the welfare hotels of Hamburg last summer, and Romanians camped in the train stations of Berlin. The Alexanderplatz was a flea market and refugee camp for the wretched refuse of a dozen republics of the decaying East.

What all this means is that just as reunification was too important to be left to its allies, so German foreign policy vis-à-vis the East will remain too important for Germany to follow anybody's lead. This seizing of the initiative will have an economic as well as a political dimension. The essence of European economic integration involves commitments to coordinate economic policy, but Germany's interests in what was formerly East Germany—as well as the countries of Eastern Europe—mean that it will set policies regardless of the views of its neighbors to the west.

For example, almost all Western European nations—and, for that matter, the United States—would like Germany's central bank to loosen its credit policy. The West's industrialized nations are in the midst of a serious economic slowdown and want to see interest rates move lower. But the Bundesbank has other priorities. Germany is financing its costly reunification effort with massive government borrowing. The fear is that deficit spending in Bonn will create inflation—and the combination of debt and inflation is a politically dangerous one in a country with a past that includes the Weimar Republic. In February, the Bundesbank raised interest rates. Coordination with the six other leading industrial nations—its fellow members of the Group of Seven—was simply not a consideration.

In domestic German politics the most important issue of the 1990s will continue to be national integration—a development no one in Europe foresaw even two or three years ago. How much aid should the old West Germany give the old Eastern republic? Should Germans in Leipzig earn the same wages as Germans in Hamburg? If so, should Germans earn ten times the wages of the Poles? What, in short, does it mean to be German? To be European? The questions thought to have been settled in the 1950s are back. Germany is once again the central nation of Europe—doomed to be torn between the different halves of the continent, belonging fully to neither, feared by both.

The free movement of people within a consumer-oriented continent would seem to be one of the New Europe's success stories. I saw it in the

action on the ferry from Goteborg in Sweden to Frederikshavn in Denmark. Superficially, it was uninspiring: hundreds of Scandinavians drinking beer and playing the slot machines. But let us not forget that these were the descendants of the Vikings; better drinking and gambling than raping and pillaging. And the shopkeeper I met up in Hammerfest had recently realized a lifetime ambition: He'd bought a small summer house in Portugal. The old Norman Dream—something somewhere warm—but this time purchased, not conquered. The Danes and their neighbors are pacific enough today; was Europe's Viking problem caused by the weak and undeveloped tourism industry of the Dark Ages? If the Huns had had credit cards, would the Caesars have survived?

The historians keep saying that the Goths and the Vandals didn't want to destroy Roman civilization; like the Okies in California, they just wanted a piece. On this assumption, the defense of civilization becomes reduced to providing happiness and prosperity for all—or, better, happiness *through* prosperity for all.

This is the notion the Common Market is based upon. To some degree it works. Nobody cares who owns Alsace and Lorraine anymore, because everybody can buy as much of it as they can afford. The Germans don't have to invade; they can just get in their BMWs and drive to Paris. Already they can get cash from the bank machines there; soon, according to the plan, they won't even have to change money at the border.

But to the east there are few, few BMWs—few decent roads, for that matter. The typical Polish highway has three lanes and no minimum speed. Horse-drawn haywagons amble down major highways. The Poles pasture cows on the shoulders of their roads; I saw Gypsy clans in donkey caravans in Thrace, water buffalo carts in Transylvania, and everywhere in the former East bloc huge heavy trucks laboring up hills and pouring foul smoke into the air.



East-bloc cars were built for these conditions. With the exception of a handful of the most recent models, most of these cars have trouble sustaining speeds of more than fifty miles an hour, and they seem to be in constant need of repair. No East-bloc highway is complete without a few cars sitting on the side of the road, hoods up and drivers staring perplexedly at the mysteries within.

Now that the Iron Curtain is down, these Trabis and Dacias, these Ladas and Skodas and Wartburgs and Moskvas, these haywagons and Gypsy donkey caravans are inching toward the Western autobahns by the millions, innocently confident that they will be welcome. Welcome not as tourists, that is, but as immigrants. *Freedom, brothers.* Who would plod along some miserable Polish roadway, some Bosnian cart track, when they can zoom at top speed on the flawlessly engineered superhighways of the West? Sure, they won't go as quickly as the BMWs, not at first—the Easterners know that—but they'll go faster than they do now, and the greater efficiency will help them trade up.

NOW THAT THE IRON CURTAIN IS DOWN, THE TRABIS, LADAS, AND SKODAS ARE INCHING TOWARD THE WESTERN AUTOBAHNS, INNOCENTLY CONFIDENT THAT THEY WILL BE WELCOME

This is what Eastern Europe hopes the changes are all about. Thanks to satellite dishes and cable networks, the Eastern Europeans are watching Western TV shows and ad spots. The effect? I asked a classroom of Bulgarian economics students how many of them would move to the West if they could. These were kids with, by Bulgarian standards, bright futures. Eighteen out of twenty raised their hands. Polls last summer in the Soviet Union showed 30 percent of the population wanted to emigrate; figures are

ALREADY SOME OF THE BORDER CROSSINGS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST LOOK WORSE THAN ANYTHING ON THE U.S.-MEXICAN FRONTIER

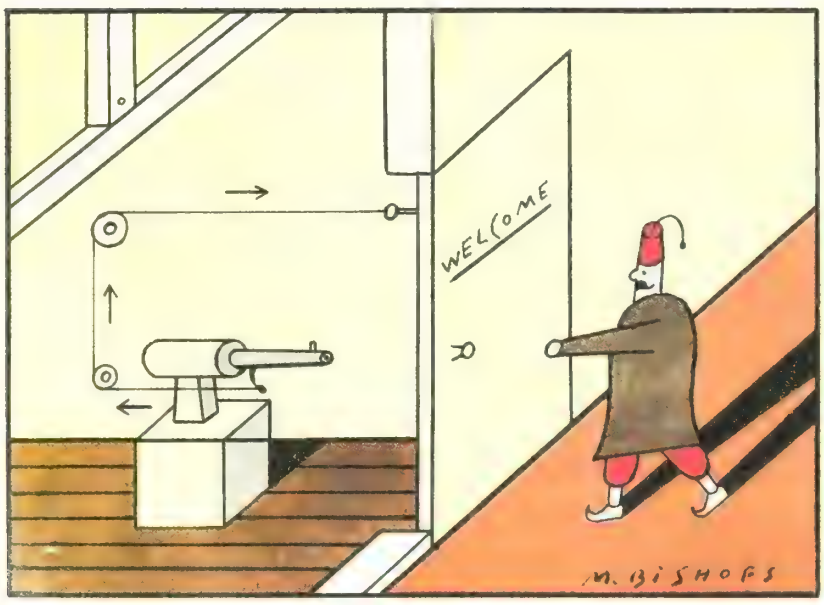
comparable in much of the rest of Eastern Europe.

But Western Europe lacks the ability to accommodate the dreamers or the dreams. The postwar Western European economic miracle ended twenty years ago. Unemployment today stands just under 10 percent in Italy and France, 7 percent in Germany, 15 percent in Spain. No room here for the millions who want in from the old communist world—or for the millions more from Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

"It is not fair," a Polish journalist complained to me late one evening during my stay in Warsaw. "Why can't there be a West Poland to come to the rescue of poor East Poland? Why is there no West Poland to take away the bad zlotys, the bad cars, the bad passports, and give us the good ones?"

Western Europe today is unable to satisfy the economic desires of its own, much less work a miracle for its neighbors to the east. Already some of the border crossings between East and West look worse than anything on the U.S.-Mexican frontier. The Austrians have deployed troops to their border with Hungary to keep out Romanian illegals. The Germans last summer were talking about retraining the old East German border guards for service on the Polish frontier.

The Red Flag still flies in the southern Yugoslavian province of Kosovo, but Kosovo—an autonomous province of the Serbian Republic until 1989, when the rebellious provincial parliament was dissolved by Serbian authorities—is very much an aspiring republic. One measure of the seriousness of the independence movement is that you can serve a prison sentence if you say the words "Kosovo Republic" in the wrong tone of voice, or fly the wrong flag, or even make the peace sign around a member of the national militia. In the dismal hotels of Priština, the province's largest city and the capital, you can still be eavesdropped upon by secret police in the lobbies, and you still hear mysterious clicks on your phone.



Centuries ago, Kosovo's population was largely Serbian, and the province was the center of a high medieval culture until the fourteenth-century Ottoman conquest. "Our ancestors were using *forks* when the Crusaders came," a concierge of Serbian descent told me. "They were *amazed* at our culture." People still use forks in Kosovo, but otherwise things have changed. Three fourths or more of the current population—exact figures are in dispute—is of Albanian ancestry. The next-largest group is the Serbs; they are followed by the Gypsies, Turks, Macedonians, and a scattering of others. It is the Albanians who talk about self-determination and have ideas about independence.

Policemen, militiamen, and other employees of the omnipresent security forces spend a lot of time on slow summer days sipping coffee at the café of Priština's Grand National Hotel, but so does everyone else in town. There seemed to be a fair number of businessmen making deals in the shade of the awnings on the afternoon I dropped by—one more flicker of the New Europe. Barefoot Gypsy children begged for money and scraps until chased away by the waiters; old people in traditional dress played Albanian folk music in the hope of a tip.

I was lucky enough to run into a group of young Kosovans who spoke English rather well and who were willing to talk despite the ever-present eavesdroppers. There were five in the group, two Serbian youths and three Albanians, and at first they dismissed my questions about ethnic tensions.

"The old people talk about it all the time," said Pyotr, one of the Serbs. "But for us it isn't so important."

The Albanians seemed to agree. "For me," said one who introduced himself as Ben, "it is more important how a person acts than what nationality he is."

Again, general agreement. Very nice, I thought. A Yugoslav melting pot. "Of course," Ben added, "most of the Serbians have not been behaving well lately."

I had come down from Belgrade to see Priština, following a tiny road through Kosovan villages after leaving the main highway north of Skopje. Main roads were paved and power lines ran through the valleys; otherwise it could have been the nineteenth century—or Paraguay. Donkey carts lumbered over the roadway; peasants in traditional dress labored in the fields; each region had its own distinctive style of haystack. The approach to Priština was less picturesque. I followed a potholed road awash in open sewage. I spotted underfed dogs skulking between parked cars and half-dressed toddlers staring up blankly along the gutters.

Serbs I had met in Belgrade were full of warnings about the Albanians in Kosovo. In my notebook now I find "Muslim fundamentalists," "subhuman," "large families," "trying to take over," "linked to Libya." And this sentence: "The fight here is the fight for Europe."

When I told the kids at the Grand National about the warnings I'd received in Belgrade, the three Albanians laughed. "Yes," said one of them, a lanky seventeen-year-old who speaks several European languages and was attending school in Croatia on a basketball scholarship. "That's what they think. But what we want is human rights and independence."

This was too much for Pyotr. At one point he leaned forward and told me in a whisper, "But it's true, you know, about the families. They have seven, ten children apiece. And they are trying to push us out of Kosovo. It used to be 100 percent Serbian."

Hannah, an Albanian, heard this. "But the Serbs are trying to kill us," she said.

"What are you talking about?" I asked.

"Last month," she said, "in the schools. First they took all the Serbian kids out of school and then they put in poison gas. Plenty of kids got sick." The other Albanian kids agreed, adding details about people they knew, or had heard of, who'd suffered in the attack.

Pyotr said something very forceful in Serbo-Croatian, and Ben disagreed. More voices joined in. "Wait," I said. "*English, English.* Tell me this. Are things better or worse between Serbs and Albanians than they were five years ago?"

Worse now, they all agreed. Much worse. It's becoming rarer and rarer for Albanians and Serbs to be friends, I was told. Intermarriage is almost unheard of. The Albanians ran down their list of grievances: the television and radio stations occupied; Albanians fired from the police force; troops brought in from other parts of the country to maintain order; economic discrimination against Albanians; special privileges for Serbian "settlers."

The Serbian kids got more and more restless listening to these complaints, and finally they drifted off—though not before telling me that they would fight if they had to to keep Kosovo part of a Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia. "They don't really want to be part of Yugoslavia," one of the Serbs said. "They want Greater Albania."

"Is that true?" I asked the Albanian kids.

"Of course not," Ben said. "Albania is communist. We don't want to join it."

"But what if the communists there lose power?"

"Well, that would be different."

"Would you fight for Kosovan independence from Yugoslavia, from the Serbs?"

"As long as it takes." ■

SERBS IN BELGRADE TALKED OF ALBANIANS IN KOSOVO AS "SUBHUMAN," "TRYING TO TAKE OVER," EVEN "LINKED TO LIBYA"

RUDDERLESS FICTION: LESSON ONE

By Rick DeMarinis

Starting out: Decide on a version of yourself you can live with. (Sweet, rank, deluded, wise, thick, brassy, naive, monstrous—this will be your point-of-view character.) Notice we didn't say, Decide on what your story will be about. Let's put that on the back burner. On the front burner: character. Your first assignment—wear the clothes, for one full week, your father (if female, substitute "mother") would approve of. Now note, in detail, how you feel about your life achievement to date. Do you fear you will be found out? Some say this fear is an essential quality of the writer's personality. Entertain, for the moment, the child's awful notion of Mother and Father in primal embrace. Play with the red fiber of your soul in the titillating way a cat strings out the internal organs of a bird, then pretend you are dealing with a character whose name is, for instance, Don, Barb, or The Loner.

Say Don's life is a mess. Say his wife just walked out, preferring a young buck with artistic sensitivity named Stu. Or say Barb's husband, Helmut, decides to move into his secretary's apartment, and then, a week later, Barb's sweet retriever, Love Me Do, dies of a twisted intestine. You get the idea. We call this "The Rack." (Lesson 2) I got on the bus in Phoenix, hoping never to see that town again. Or, I was on the bus to Albuquerque when this loner sitting next to me decides to get friendly. "Tell me true, Bud," he says, "you hate me, don't you? And you don't even know me, right? This's been going on all my life." In each of the above, the writer has "Hit the Ground Running." (Lesson 3)

Rick DeMarinis is the author of The Year of the Zinc Penny, *a novel, and* The Voice of America, *a collection of stories to be published next month by Norton. His last story in* Harper's Magazine, *"Insulation," appeared in the July 1989 issue.*

Are we going to have a knuckle-biting stroll through the troubled thickets of family, or a ball-busting adventure among the wrong-headed and disoriented? These are the two categories we recommend. (Some have combined the two with rewarding results.) Which one you choose will reflect your life to date and what you've been able to make of it. Have you been through the mill and *still* not gotten wise to "The Setup" (Lesson 11), or are there cracks of light beginning to leak through? Story will help you decide. If nothing else, story is a "teacher."

Story. Defining "story" is like trying to define "food." You know what food is, but there is such a huge variety you know that one cuisine will seem utterly alien or absurd to habitués of another. You need training in the cuisines, you need training in the microbiology of organic matter, the chemistry of nutrition. You need to be able to discuss the compounds found in various food groups as if they were old friends. A story, as food, is a snack, a good meal, or a feast—depending on what you've got stashed in your "Deep Freeze." (Lesson 35) We feed on the lives of those who are starving.

You know, I was young once, too. I'll never forget the first time I tasted *homard à l'absinthe*. You're no bargain, my first wife had said. I was twenty-six years old but still wet behind the ears. She had a great influence on me, Bunny did. She was from New York—Yonkers—and I had come east out of the hills of South Dakota. I was the typical farm boy, complete with ankle-high brogans, drawl, and double-breasted suit in a single-breasted era. Educated but ignorant. I thought "Missionary Position" had something to do with church politics. I had a good job and supported her and our three little tykes quite well. Soon I became in charge of the Venturi Design Unit of Mikkelson Carburetors. You're no bargain, she said. I honestly believed I was a

bargain. Honey, you're no bargain either, I said. You're a *steal*. But charm doesn't work. She jabbed a thrusting finger into her yawning mouth. I stormed out of the house—by that time we were living in Piscataway—and got drunk at La Maison de la Lune. In the lounge, I met Ardith Sorrentina. (Lesson 6) "Let's eat some of that *homard*," I said. Why do I bring this up? Let us just say, for the moment, that art must hold a mirror up to life. Not a *flat* mirror. Avoid the flat mirror at all costs. Remember the fun-house mirrors of your youth? Convex, concave, rippled, cracked. The thin man looks fat, the fat man looks murderously lean, the dependable man looks multiple and deranged. Each of us has but one mirror. If yours is flat, take our course in Architectural Drafting.

I am on the bus to Albuquerque and this old boy gets on at Las Cruces. He's wearing a beat-up canvas backpack that issues puffs of mold spore every time he shifts his weight. His greasy hair is long and snaky. I worry he is going to sit next to me, but he takes a seat next to this little old lady two rows up. The guy starts talking to her. She tries to ignore him. She takes up her knitting or crochet work and leans toward the window. But he's hard to ignore. He's on a mission of wild truth-seeking. He thinks he can solve his life if he keeps *telling* it. You can hear him over the roar of the diesel engine, you can hear him over the wind of travel, you can hear him over the crackle of collapsing cells inside your beleaguered brain. He's droning on about how even his own mother did not like him:

She barred him from her breast.

She put him up for adoption but there were no takers.

In school he applied for the role of Outcast and was unanimously accepted.

He was the cooperative butt of playground pranks.

He became a masturbatory loner who found work as an appliance repairman.

He pretended to be lame once, to attract the pity of strangers. He retains the limp of this ploy, even though it got him nothing.

He married a woman less attractive in most ways than himself, and yet it was *she* who grew to despise *him*.

(The woman he is telling this to is calling to the driver for assistance. The driver warns the man to shut up or he'll put him off the bus right here, ten miles from Socorro.)

A man and a woman are having lunch in Tucson, say. It doesn't matter where. Writers who worry themselves about "where" want a safety net under their aerialists as if local flora and fauna, established gentries, social blight, family, the various institutions that give a world its purpose and shape, were a base reality that persists with some sort of metaphysical integrity beneath our squandered lives. Forget about it. There is no such net. The aerialists are balanced on thin wires above pure abyss. All of "best "where" is an *emblem* of pure abyss. Underscore this too: We live in a context of unbroken ignorance. God will love you if you take this to heart. This is the one constant you can rely on (though the propaganda that convinces you otherwise is growing more sophisticated daily). It is the single, timeless truth that informs (paradoxically) your work. Your assignment now is to go out and study the paintings of Hopper, all the time repeating to yourself: We are the aerialists. We are the abyss. Between each of us there is no net. My home, my town, my nation—they will not catch me when I fall.



I felt myself falling through black bottomless space. You're no bargain, she said. You're no bargain either, I said later that evening, meaning it now, which more or less completed the rift. How did it begin? Let me count the ways. *Mea culpa:* I was less attentive after Denise was born. Why did we name our children Dennis, Denise, and Daniella and then *re*name them Perry, Penny, and Patsy? There is no overestimating human frivolity. If one day we are replaced by supercomputers with robotic features, I would be the last to complain. (We are halfway there, now that quantum theory has given us the 85-nanometer chip. Chips smaller—but more reliable—than brain cells will soon be on the market.) Are you finished? she would ask, cool and immobile as marble. Stung, I would withdraw from her, angry but spent. (When writing about sex, it is best to understate.) (Lesson 12) Is there a happiness that

Illustration by John Craig

does *not* collapse like withered flesh from desiccated bone? Do not show me a fictional denial. Do not produce the latest Burning Bush Romance as proof positive that love triumphs over all. Assignment: Go out and get half shitfaced and think about this.

Let's return to the couple in the restaurant that may or may not be in Tucson, Arizona. What is going on between them is partly submerged in an "Artistry of Gestures." (Lesson 5) Everything in life has a signboard on it, but it's invariably the *wrong* signboard. (Be alert: The world is painted with splendid lies.) Think of the iceberg's sea-hidden five sixths. The loner on the bus is the narrator's iceberg. Don Bremerton stirred his coffee even though he had not used the cream or sugar. "I feel so displaced, Angela—it's as if you've restructured your thinking about us," he said. Don took pride in his ability to put nervous strangers at ease. He had perfected mannerisms and verbal techniques to defuse their paranoia, stomach pains, and even boredom. But none of his methods seemed to have an effect on Angela. Angela looked at him over the elegant, enamel-hard menu. "I'm sorry?" she said, a distracted *Gioconda* smile moving her lips imperceptibly. Don swallowed with difficulty. He knew that smile, how it made him feel as useless as a canceled stamp . . .

Here is embryonic melodrama in situ. This is like a silver wind chime touched by the first gusts of a storm, whereas another protostory might bring to mind an alley full of garbage cans being knocked around by feral dogs.

I saw a woman in a restaurant drink twenty containers of nondairy creamer as if they were thimbles of good whiskey: Incident. Incident: A large blond man in a good suit asked me for spare change. He was hungry, he said. I said, The hell you are, you're just greedy for abuse. But incidents are not stories. There is no story in a bothersome old man getting kicked off a bus. There is no story in Don's saying, Have it your way, Angie baby, and then strutting out of the restaurant, flipping off the world. He can't pull the Gordian triangle out of his own brain as if it were a slipknot. We *need* dependencies. We need to see how the cranky and spurious are really the "Universal in Costume:" (Lesson 46) This is how we recognize our common lot. These writers will die for your sins, which are also their sins. They will give you all they know and much more. The great poets have it: "Give the initiative to the word." "Death is the mother of beauty." "We think by feeling. What is there to know?" "Don't claim it and the sea belongs to you." "People possess four things that are no good at sea: anchor, rudder, oars, and the fear of going down." And, of course, "Were beth they biforen us weren?" These are your basic articles of faith. Repeat them as you once repeated, in the darkness of childhood, the Lord's Prayer.

I found myself going down alone: My rudder and anchor was the bottle. I say, "Thank Jesus for the bottle, even though it led to my professional ruin." (Lesson 49) I could not direct the dozen young engineers who needed my guidance. I no longer cared about Venturi Design. I went on the road, discovered Beth Zanknor. She liked to fuck and drink and argue. She had a husband somewhere in the Far East, repairing short-range radar sets for the army. Beth liked to say, "Clyde, the future is the future but the past is what you make it." She called all men Clyde. She had long skinny toes and was able to pick up magazines with her feet without tearing or wrinkling the pages. "You've had three months of Beth Zanknor," she said, "and I've had three months of you, Clyde. Whaddya say we call it an afternoon while we're ahead?"

Life is not a perfect grid, marked off, leveled, easy to look at, predictable. Hold the mirror up. But first, make sure your mirror has an *honest* bend in it: It must always reflect more, and sometimes less, than is "out there." Don't bend it to be "Fashionable." (Lesson 50) Your next assignment: Check out your mirror. Examine it. Be sure you can abide its irregular shapes. Can you stand to have people whose respect you'd like to court call you Liar? Lunatic? Dipshit? Fraud?

"The hairy truth lives coarse and timeless under the bald lie." I think T. S. Eliot said that. Fiction is a lie (since *we* are) and poetry is the supreme fiction. You must find your ounce of poetry in the bus to Albuquerque, even if you wind up hopelessly entangled with the confused ramblings of unredeemable bores. Don married Angela on a bright afternoon in Tucson. He was young and dazzled by his own prospects. Over the years they've had four children and now Don finds himself locked into a hateful job sorting through stacks of legal papers for a government agency that oversees federal loans to new businesses involved in aerospace subcontracting. How did he get into this? Don is thirty-five, Angela is thirty-one, and both of them are lonely. Maybe Angela believes her beauty is beginning to fade and she associates this with the idea of Lost Opportunities. Known for her calmness in the face of domestic calamity, she is now visited by panic attacks. These usually afflict her in the early hours of the morning, 3:00 A.M., say, the hour of the wolf, as the poet so aptly called it. Her pills, powerful as they are, merely dull the beast. Her behavior becomes intriguingly unpredictable. Where are your sympathies here? With Don, with Angela, or with Stu Stormo-

vik, the landscape painter Angela has started an affair with? Your sympathies had better be everywhere; they had better be with Don, Angela, Barb, Stu, Helmut, Love Me Do, and with the hateful old loner, who may or may not be a child molester.

Are you sure you want to go through with this? We will be happy to refund your initial payment—minus a 25 percent penalty to cover our costs. Nowhere in our prospectus do we say that writing is easy, enjoyable, or a pleasant way to make one's living in the privacy of one's own home without a time clock to punch or a boss's rosy ass to kiss. You may wind up like the loner on the bus: boring, despicable, repetitive, unoriginal, telling your stories out of habit and ugly impulse rather than out of the simple virtue of serving a communal need. Troubadour, bard, skald, campfire ghost-story teller. Raconteur. If you cannot see yourself in this light, then how *can* you see yourself? Others may see you as narcissistic, self-obsessed, guilt-ridden, and bent on exposing your squalid but rather ordinary and nonexemplary life to the "connoisseurs" of the "arts." Give it up *now*. They may be right about you.

And now we come to the hard part: You must know when a tale comes to its natural conclusion. In story-writing you don't begin with meaning, you end with it. But don't ask what is meant by meaning. You were told to keep this on the back burner. Now you are being told to keep it there. In fact, let's turn off the gas. A story should not mean; at best it should be meant. You didn't plan on it, but Helmut wins all the marbles. Let him. Who wins and who loses is always beside the point. Imagine yourself scuba diving off the California coast, out by the continental shelf. You're in comfortable green water, the sandy reassuring bottom in view, when suddenly you glimpse the vast black trench beyond the lip of the shelf. Make yourself linger there a moment. Oh God! Now write: The End.

Every story is a detective story. The murder goes unsolved even after the killer has been gassed, hanged, injected, or gunned down by the SWAT team. Philip Marlowe sits in his office knocking back straight shots of blended whiskey when reason tells us he should be thinking about raising a family in the law-abiding valley. The story is over, he has triumphed, but he's still puzzling it out. The detective story is a metaphor for every other kind of story. (Lesson 22) The Heart of the Matter is the Heart of Darkness. The heart is also a lonely hunter.

Why do you think we actively seek the pain we knew as children? *Nostalgia*? If you don't think you do, quit now.

After Don Bierman has killed his wife and her lover, and is tracked down and caught, he goes to the gas chamber with Absolute Calm. What can Marlowe do about that except be Absolute Calm? (Lesson 83) What can you do about it? Where can we go from here?

(Lessons 81–82)

I kicked him in the teeth, but not hard enough. He threw me down on the pool table, a cue stick against my throat. He should kill me, you fruit, I said, which was, in retrospect, unwise. I see this as the "Apex of My Self-destructive Era." (Lesson 51) Out of catastrophe comes progress, reads a certain hexagram in the Book of Changes. He brought the thick end of the cue across my face, moving my nose over an inch. I woke up in an alley. The doctor who put my nose back, after hearing about my life odyssey from highly respected engineer to bottom-feeding drunk, said, "You know, Bud, if I were a writer, I'd write about you." That put the idea in my head for the School. Natalie O'Naillovich helped me with the organizational work; she also backed the enterprise with her divorce settlement. We got married and function, to this day, as a team. Sex life: Hey, not bad for a couple of carved-up gray-heads with a list of physical complaints about as long as your forearm! We share a house in Connecticut but have separate bedrooms. My snoring, her night sweats. My small bladder, her teeth grinding.

How To Know When You've Reached the Stopping Point: When you've finished, your "Emptiness" (Lesson 13) will collide with the barrier of white space at the end of the last sentence. The collision should make a haunting sound. You will hear it. The untended vacuum between where the writer leaves off and the reader begins must chime. Or be bridged by thunder, or by that incendiary laughter that authorities fear. This is the place in the story where the aerialists realize there is no net and never has been. We watch them in horror as they try the impossible stunt—or watch them in shame and embarrassment as they refuse to attempt the easiest trick of balance. Sometimes we leak furious tears as they—so beautiful, so brave—lose their grip on the slender bar that suspends them above all that "Inviting Nothingness." (Lesson 59) Oh yes, we are lost. But we are lost together.

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THE SECOND REVOLUTION

Sexual politics on campus: A case study

By Philip Weiss

Petite Jane Pfaff has a doelike poise I associate with pictures of campus life twenty-five years ago, and the self-conscious postures she and I have taken on the overstuffed furniture of Kappa Kappa Gamma's living room bring back the awkwardness of outdated courtship rituals. In her turtleneck sweater she's tentative and unreachable, while I feel big, clumsy, worried I'll say the wrong thing. Outside the white clapboard sorority house the Dartmouth College campus is about to begin its annual fall rites; freshmen are stacking heavy pine timbers on the Green for the bonfire on Friday night. Dartmouth men will dance around the blaze like their belovedly imagined Indians. They'll get drunk and naked and whoop the old college war cry, "Wah-Hoo-Wah." It's hard to forget that this is the campus that inspired *Animal House*.

But Jane Pfaff, whose sorority I'd come to visit because it is active in addressing sexual issues, would like us to forget that picture. She's holding out two letters—one signed by the Sigma Delta sorority and the other by Kappa Kappa Gamma's executive committee—the wording of which is anything but tentative:

"Amid recent rumors of alleged acts involving VOYEURISM, SEXUAL HARASSMENT and SEXUAL ASSAULT, we feel the need to express our outrage. We have been silent too long," reads the letter from Sigma Delta. "Witnesses to these crimes who have not come forward are equally responsible . . ." In one rumored incident to which the letter refers, a group of men had stood hunched outside a fraternity-house window as a brother made it with a drunken woman. Then the men had come into the bedroom and hovered over her body to watch; the woman had been too drunk to realize that the man was lying when he assured her they were alone.

Kappa Kappa Gamma's letter reads, "By breaking our silence and acknowledging the problem, we are ending our inadvertent acceptance of these atrocities."

There was a time, not very long ago, when fraternity voyeurism was regarded as a prank—distasteful, even morally repugnant, but a prank. Its characterization as an "atrocity" reflects the fact that, almost overnight, Dartmouth has become a village of concern over sexual issues. It was news of this unlikely transformation that brought me to Dartmouth, in Hanover, New Hampshire, last summer and again in the fall; I'd heard that, in the aftermath of a single, dramatic case, the school's familiar image as a scratching post for the animals of the Ivy League had given way to a regime of sensitivity.

On first impression, the revolution appeared complete. The council of fraternities and sororities had organized a Sexual Awareness Week. The right-wing *Dartmouth Review*, a bastion of unreconstructed male chauvinism, was suddenly decrying the tendency of Dartmouth men to treat women with "hostility . . . [as] herds of cattle." A group called REACT was going around campus giving a lecture-and-video presentation on "myths and stereotypes about rape." One night a man in the audience announced that he was taking down the *Playboy* pinup from his wall.

Similar scenes of awareness and conversion are taking place on campuses all over the country today. And with the issue of date rape on campus commanding the media's attention, society seems at last prepared to recognize—on college campuses anyway—a new category of sexual crime: the rape of women by men they know. At the same time, the campus activists who succeeded in bringing this overdue sensitivity to the subject of date rape are now pushing to gain recognition of new forms of offensive conduct, variously designated as "sexual abuse," "sexual coercion," and "sexual harassment," wide categories that sometimes seem to have less to do with a specific set of deeds committed by men than with certain feelings experienced by women.

These issues had arrived on the Dartmouth campus with great force. The college had endured a widely

Philip Weiss is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *His last report was "The Quiet Coup," published in the September 1989 issue.*

publicized case involving not rape but a related act, an alleged assault by an aggressive male against a passive female. It was termed a case of "sexual abuse." Eventually it found its way into court. Hundreds of pages of confidential disciplinary proceedings were made public. (The school seems to specialize in public dramas; this is the college that was in the news a few years ago for its students' sledgehammer attacks on antiapartheid shanties on the Green and more recently for an uproar over a quote from Hitler that appeared on the masthead of the *Review*.)

This time the party of sensitivity had won a resounding victory. "We want to be on the cutting edge of sexual-assault issues," Brian Ellner, the student assembly president, told me last October. "This issue is one that our generation must confront." Today the dean's office is telling students that they should not have sex without a clearly stated "yes" on both sides. Sexual-abuse activists are holding workshops to help students recast the male psyche. Students are even questioning the appropriateness of the college bonfire, with its holocaust of waste, its incitements to male abandon.

New mores are in force. Because of an episode that came to be known as the Acker case, sorority girls like Jane Pfaff have been transformed into sexual-abuse activists, and a college campus has been turned upside down.

It is a short walk from Kappa Kappa Gamma, along a slight hill—the incline of the Connecticut River valley—past the whitewashed administration buildings with their verdigris roofs, to Richardson Hall, the dormitory where the Acker case began more than three years ago, without anyone knowing it was beginning.

Richardson is a mishmash of oaken Ivy League prestige and adolescent romper room. Jammed up against the wide staircase on the first floor is a Ping-Pong table. Nearby is the bathroom—a "two-holer" in the rustic Dartmouth nomenclature: old marble stalls gone a little mossy and wooden doors hung by nickel fixtures. This bathroom, so central to the Acker case, is not open and clear with wide clean sightlines, as you might imagine it, but narrow and cramped.

It was a weekend night in October 1987. A group of drunken freshmen was moving restlessly from a party in the basement of Topliff, a dorm, to a bigger party in another dorm, Mid-Mass, and stopped at Richardson to pick someone up. By sophomore year, the same students would be centering their social life around fraternities.

Among the group of freshmen was a woman I'll call Alma Lee,* a Korean-American from the Midwest who had graduated from a New England prep school. She's of medium height, athletically built, attractive, and from a conservative family that put a great deal of emphasis on achievement. Alma Lee is not what would be considered traditional Dartmouth material. Her presence in part reflects new president James O. Freedman's emphasis on diversity, on ending what he calls Dartmouth's "boys will be boys" culture.



Above: Kevin Acker, accompanied by his attorney (left) and his father, at his first court hearing last August. Acker sued Dartmouth after the college found him guilty of "sexual abuse" and suspended him for a term. At left, the poster that appeared on campus last March.

Alma had drunk four or five beers, and she needed to pee. She went into the two-holer, which at the time was a men's room; there were no women's rooms in Richardson, the school having not yet completed the integration of its facilities fifteen years after first admitting women.

Another student from the group of freshmen was also in the men's room: Kevin Acker, a blunt man from Dallas whose thick build and dark curly hair give him a resemblance to Sluggo.

* *Although "Alma Lee" has been identified by her actual name in the press on more than one occasion, I have chosen here to respect her desire for anonymity.*

Photograph by Hugo Restall

had noticed him going up to the [illegible] group, trying to sniff their necks, saying, "Mmmm, you smell good."

Much later there would be a dispute about who was in the bathroom first, Kevin Acker or Alma Lee, about who approached whom, about who led whom into one of the casket-size marble stalls. Three years later a lot about this night would be fuzzy and contentious. For instance, Acker would say that they were in the Richardson men's room for eight minutes; Alma would say it was three.

When the two came out of the bathroom and the group of '91s plunged back into the brisk air of the New Hampshire fall, Alma Lee's mood had changed, according to Craig Rush, a friend who was there. She didn't want to go on to Mid-Mass anymore; she asked Rush to walk her home. Later he'd recall how she held a little too tightly to his side, how she didn't say much. She asked him to wait at the door until someone else went in, until she knew she would not be alone inside. It seemed a bit odd to him, but he didn't make anything of this behavior for another three years.

A few weeks later, Alma's friend David Lillard learned part of what happened that night. He heard from Craig Rush that Acker had been boasting that he "scammed" with Alma Lee in the Richardson bathroom. When Lillard told Alma about the boast, she flared with anger—her third week at the school and she's "pinned" in a bathroom by a stranger.

"I . . . internalized it and tried to not think of it ever," she said later. As a result, it would be another two and a half years before she told her story and before Edward J. Shanahan, Dartmouth College dean, learned of a paradoxical idiom current among his students when he interrupted the testimony, in a closed hearing on the Alma Lee matter, to ask what Craig Rush meant by the word "scam."

"Scamming?" Rush said. "Scamming applies to a kind of physical contact . . . sexual contact."

When I visited Dartmouth, I asked several students what they meant by scamming. It wasn't anything you'd do with your girlfriend or boyfriend, they said; it was more illicit than that and included everything from making out to intercourse. Sometimes it was very nearly random: the sorts of things that happen at the end of parties. It conveyed a mutuality of purpose, like "gamming," the word for meetings at sea. But I couldn't sever the word from its real-world meaning—of having conned someone—and perhaps in that association lay some of Alma Lee's pain.


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SEX OFFENDER

Acker Loses Bid for Reinstatement

pages 6 & 7

Inside:

A Survey of the Government Dept. — pg. 5
A Little Doublespeak — pg. 9
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The first time I saw Kevin Acker, last August 28, he was steaming into a bathroom—this time with his lawyer—at the Grafton County Courthouse, outside the little town of North Haverhill, New Hampshire, in the foothills of the White Mountains thirty-five miles north of campus, during the first and only public hearing on his case. Everything Acker does seems to have a steaming, straight-ahead quality, a tapir's clumsy persistence. It was partly due to this quality that Acker had become something of a big man on campus in the three years that had passed since that night freshman year.

Now his beloved college had suspended him for what a Dartmouth statement called "an encounter in a men's bathroom," and Acker was suing the school to have the suspension lifted. Making his case to the judge, his tone was that of the BMOC who has suffered incomprehensible indignities: "I plan to apply for the Rhodes, Marshall, and Fulbright scholarships. It would prove difficult for me to prepare my applications well if I am not on campus," he said. "I've resigned as editor of *The Dartmouth* [the school daily]. I expect that my membership in Casque & Gauntlet [a society of student leaders] will be terminated. . . ."

Wearing a light tweed jacket, Acker flushed as he catalogued these disgraces for the judge. He had already stepped down from Palaeopitus, the senior society of twenty that, in fireside chats, advises the dean and president on affairs at the college.

"Allow me to . . . walk around this campus with my head held high," he'd pleaded with the college's disciplinary committee six weeks before this hearing. He had paid for a lie-detector test to show he was telling the truth when he answered no to the question, "Did Alma protest verbally or physically in any way when you touched her . . . ?"

Even Alma Lee had agreed, in confidential testimony two months earlier, that she hadn't said no. But Acker had been convicted of sexual abuse just the same. His conduct would have been regarded as unextraordinary, he testified in court, had the college not been overwhelmed by "radicals."

Dartmouth's lawyer asked if it wasn't true that students were supposed to get an explicit "yes" before

proceeding with sex. Acker mocked him. "'Can I touch you here? Can I touch you here?' I think it would be viewed as extremely strange by females to require a 'yes, yes, yes,'" he said. "It certainly is not the standard observed by males on the Dartmouth campus." He bristled when he said that, and it was obvious just how much Acker had judged his own behavior by that of his peers.

In many ways Acker was an outsider in Hanover. A Jew, the son of a small businessman, he was one of President Freedman's recruits, part of the newly "diverse" Dartmouth. In contrast to the classic Dartmouth figure—the laid-back preppie with an athlete's cap turned the wrong way on his head—Acker took his work terribly seriously. An uncomfortable-seeming person, he had gained a reputation for abrasive arrogance. "He's widely despised," I was told by Hugo Restall, the executive editor of *The Dartmouth Review*. Freshman year Acker was turned down by a fraternity, but he rushed again as a sophomore and got in.

By his junior year Acker had climbed to the higher reaches of Dartmouth society, becoming editor in chief of *The Dartmouth*. From his post there, the Dallas boy attacked both the campus radicals and the right-wingers on *The Review*, whose politics he shared but whose old-Dartmouth clubbiness put him off.

It was soon after Kevin Acker had achieved this prominence that things started to come apart for him.

In retrospect, Kevin Acker's undoing can be dated to the day in 1989, during the fall of his junior year, when Heather Earle arrived in Hanover. The college had gone looking for a full-time, permanent sexual-awareness and sexual-harassment counselor, its first, and found the then twenty-six-year-old psychologist in Mankato, Minnesota. Such a transformative moment has taken place at many other schools in the past few years. Typically, the college comes to the realization that there is a problem with the sexual practices of young men and women living on the same halls, getting drunk at the same parties, and, often enough, going to bed with one another, sometimes with unhappy results. At one time this unhappiness might have been thought of as part of growing up, even as personal tragedy. The Heather Earles see it very differently—as a social problem and an injustice.

I met the counselor in her basement office in a building known as Dick's House, the campus health service. She reminded me of Mary Poppins—tall, kind, no-nonsense, and slightly censorious. She has tousled dark hair and a narrow face with lively, sensitive dark eyes. She wore flat shoes, a purplish dress, and a cardigan in a dull purple snowflake pattern. On the desk lay her beeper, which alerts her at all hours to the calls of victims of sexual abuse. She refers to these women as "survivors." "When you use the word 'victim,'" she explains, "you kind of picture a small, poor victim, [someone] that's continuously a victim."

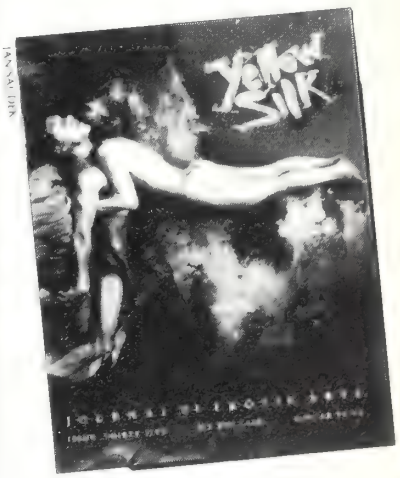
Before Earle arrived at Dartmouth, the sexual landscape had been a treacherous one for women, particularly freshmen. Parietal rules governing the interaction between men and women on campus had long since fallen. Fraternity membership was high, drawing complaints similar to those being heard on campuses all over the country: that the frats lacked adequate supervision, that at basement parties members used alcohol to get women into bed. "There was enormous confusion . . . about what the courting expectations were and what the expectations of intimacy were on the part of both men and women," Dean Edward Shanahan told me. "Both men and women did not know how to behave amid that confusion. . . . There were abuses occurring within the community that somehow were not coming to the surface. . . . We were perhaps seeing the tip of the iceberg."

One reason women didn't come forward more often is that predominantly male administrations have been reluctant to deal with their complaints. There is, of course, the fear that bad publicity will cut down on already disappointing application figures. But there is also the fact that school judicial boards are hard-

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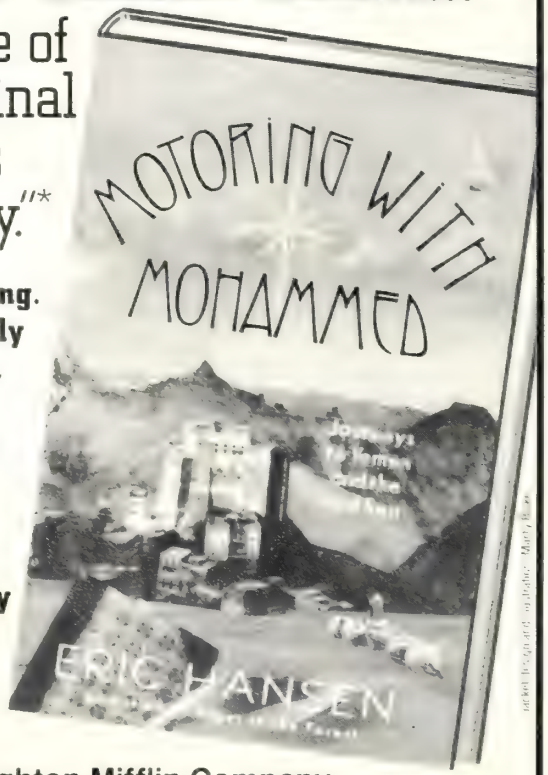
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pressed to sort out the facts of, say, a plagiarism case, let alone a rape. Dartmouth's Committee on Standards, its disciplinary board, had dealt with several cases of what the Student Handbook called sexual abuse, but the closed proceedings had sent out confused signals. In a report of one case (which the college refuses to discuss), a football player was said to have been found guilty of forcing sexual intercourse on a woman, but his suspension, conveniently, did not keep him from returning to the gridiron the following fall.

Despite such apparent clumsiness on the part of the college, few at Dartmouth question that the administration is the proper arbiter of such disputes. To someone who was in college during the early Seventies, this is one of the surprising dimensions of sexual politics on campus today; the administration was the last place we looked to for redress of our grievances. But today's students do not want to sort out these issues among themselves. Nor do they want to go to the D.A. They're evidently comfortable with *in loco parentis*, the college's traditional power as substitute parent. On the post-Reagan college campus, the administration is viewed as a benevolent, if often negligent, father figure. An unspoken understanding exists that sexual abuse on campus is a problem not for society at large to solve but for the campus family, the not-yet-adult society of the school, with its own special code of behavior.

To this troubled family, Heather Earle brought a feminist healing touch. The psychologist told Dartmouth's women that their feelings of being violated by aggressive men deserved expression. She argued that when they suppress such pain it will only break out in other ways, often in skewed behaviors that in our culture are feminized and trivialized—eating disorders, depression, self-destructive tendencies.

Earle also saw the abuse as part of something larger, of socialized differences in power between men and women. Her counseling predecessor had gone around doing a workshop with the upbeat title of Great Sexpectations. Earle, at her workshops, showed a film called *Rethinking Rape*.

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Perhaps most important, she helped start the group REACT—Rape Education Action Committee—which holds workshops critiquing the culture of rape.

"Look at the rapes in movies that are characterized as lovemaking," Earle said, giving me a sample of her teaching. "*Gone With the Wind* is a classic example. She's saying, 'No, no, no,' and he carries her upstairs, and the next morning they're in love. . . . In the socialization of boys quite often you're taught to not believe a 'no' but to push it to a 'maybe,' and then if it's a 'maybe,' maybe you can get it to a 'yes.' Or 'maybe' is 'yes.' We kind of look at that and say, 'Maybe that's not right anymore.'"

Earle's conviction that she is wrestling with a giant injustice gives her ideas a powerful, if sometimes simplistic, clarity. She is quick to condemn as "false belief" any statements that she regards as incorrect. And when she decided that an epidemic of sexual abuse on campus was being mishandled, she turned her fire on the administration that had hired her. Dartmouth's official code on sexual abuse struck her as inadequate—it "is really no definition," she said, noting that the Student Handbook contains one paragraph on sexual abuse and seven pages on alcohol. She and REACT started publicizing a truly alarming (and, as it turns out, dubious) statistic: that 125 Dartmouth women are raped every year.

From the start REACT was as dedicated to action as it was to education. The first case REACT seized upon, in the assault on the administration it launched a month after its formation in February 1990, was a curious one, given that by its own count 250 rapes had taken place on campus in the last two years. But in the end Moore Robinson's hickey made a hugely effective case.

On my second visit to Hanover, last October, I heard murmured reports that an audiotape existed of REACT's March 7, 1990, rally on the steps of Parkhurst, the administration building, and, after several inquiries and a promise of secrecy, I was allowed to listen to it. The drama surrounding the tape was just a ripple of the drama of the March rally. That protest marked the day the discourse changed at Dartmouth, the moment when the winking narrative about scamming gave way to the white-lipped narrative about abuse.

REACT had organized the rally to protest the administration's "sheltering [of] rapists." The word "rape" was used over and over that afternoon. M. Moore Robinson was the star speaker. Her voice flooded with feeling as she described the contemptuous treatment she had received from the administration when, a few months before, she had filed a charge of sexual abuse.

"I'm not going to go away," she cried. "I'm going to stay here until I get rid of this scourge."

A redhead with angular features

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and close-cropped hair, Robinson had visited Dartmouth in spring 1988 as a prospective student—and promptly had a disturbing encounter with a burly freshman. She'd met him at a fraternity party. He'd asked her to walk with him back to his dorm. She went along, and when they got there he pulled her toward him, tried to kiss her. She struggled out of his grasp, but not before he kissed her hard on the neck.

"It's okay, you can go. I've left my mark on you," he said, according to Robinson.

Even a year and a half later, in the fall of her sophomore year at Dartmouth, the incident held great emotional resonance for Robinson. She had spoken with another woman, an alumna, who claimed to have been roughly handled by the same student. Then, in November 1989, Robinson learned that the man who'd grabbed her—Kevin Acker, now a junior—had been named editor in chief of *The Dartmouth*. With the support of Heather Earle, Robinson decided to file charges against him. (Acker told me, "I kissed her and that's it. No force was involved.")

Robinson openly concedes that her motives were vengeful. "I had extreme loathing for this person," she told me. "His being in a position of authority showed how completely he had gotten away with his assaults. His life was hunky-dory, while I had to live with [the attack] every day."

The administration evidently did not take the case very seriously. Dean Shanahan refused to refer the matter to the college's Committee on Standards, which can recommend suspension or expulsion, and scheduled it for a dean's hearing instead. (The punishments a dean's hearing can mete out are far lighter—requiring a student to apologize, for instance.) The disposition of the case moved Robinson to write a poem called "Rape Completed." It begins, "My welcome to dartmyth/was an attempted/rape," and ends, "Rape completed/thanks to/Parkhurst." The poem was distributed on a leaflet advertising the March 7 rally.

The picture of a woman wailing before a crowd on the administration steps about a student who grabbed her two years before suggests just how inflamed college women's sensitivities have become—and perhaps also just how powerful Heather Earle's teachings are. For years, surely, people told Moore Robinson to lighten up about the incident, and probably she tried to quash her own feelings about it. It's bracing to think of her standing in the public square at Dartmouth, across from the splendid Green, within view of the library spire and the Georgian administration buildings—all the brick and clapboard accessories of flinty New England patriarchy—holding a microphone to her mouth as she gave vent to long-bottled-up rage.

But she didn't mention Kevin Acker by name. Indeed, the speech's suspense turned on the identity of her alleged attacker. She'd be disciplined if she named him, she lamented; she was powerless to warn other women. "There's nothing I'm allowed to do," she said.

Lending a chilly drama to the occasion was the fact that Acker himself was there, standing at the edge of the crowd among a group of friends. In the *Animal House* version of events this would of course have been hugely comic. A demonstration over a hickey! What sport for the boys. But Acker was now a wanted man. And his presence turned the scene into something out of *The Scarlet Letter*.

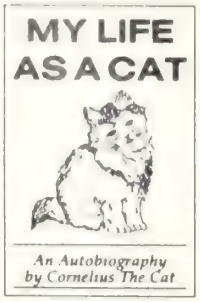
Noticing him in the crowd, Robinson seemed to lose control. On the tape her voice goes into a wail that billows out like a spinnaker of grief. She shouts, "A prime example of how completely unjust the system is is that the person who attacked me is in the audience right now! He is right here among you, and he is free to do whatever he wants, rape anyone he wants. . . ."

Acker told me he stood there stoically as people turned and searched one another's faces. But soon it was widely known on campus just who Robinson and others had meant by the "rapist." For later that day Robinson identified Acker as her alleged attacker: Emerging from the dean's office after a private meeting with Shanahan, she mentioned his name to a group of students.

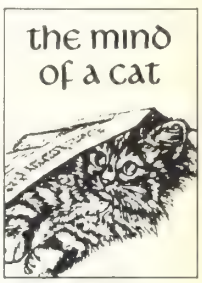
Meanwhile, a few of Moore Robinson's followers decided to alert the

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campus population to the menace before Kevin Acker molested someone else. A group of students decided to "picket the body": At times over the next few days Acker found himself followed by three or four people holding up four fingers to indicate the number of women he was said to have in one way or another abused.

Then one morning a poster appeared on campus with Acker's picture on it: "A warning to all dartmouth womyn: beware this man." At the sides of the picture were the words "how many more?????" and "you may be next!!!!!!"

These actions unhinged Kevin Acker. In a frenzy he called an associate dean to demand that the campus police take down the posters. She told him the First Amendment barred her from taking such a step. So he raced around campus tearing down the Xerox portrait from trees, lampposts, bulletin boards.

Shanahan blames these tactics on some REACT members. So do others on campus. When I asked Heather Earle about the poster, she grew defensive and opaque. "I certainly didn't advocate it," she said. "And that was students who did that on their own and in no way, shape, or form were connected to REACT or my position."

But the REACT members to whom Earle referred me included one—Lindsay Latimore—who Kevin Acker said had followed him around campus. The next day I met Latimore for breakfast at Lou's, a campus hangout. When I asked her how Acker's name had become known around campus, she smiled broadly and turned conspiratorially toward Glenn Berry, a fellow REACT member.

Berry leaned forward to explain. "We would prefer not to talk about individual cases. It puts us in a difficult situation because it's immediately attached to REACT."

Sensational and anonymous accusation is a hallmark of the sexual-abuse movement on campuses. Last fall Brown women who had become frustrated by the administration's inaction on date-rape cases began to post a list of men's names, as many as thirty, in bathroom stalls. A man was said to have earned a place on the list after a woman identified him as having committed any of a range of acts, from date rape to harassment. In one case I know about, a student ransacked his past to locate the abuse that had gotten him billboarded and then, à la Salman Rushdie, approached the activists to find out what he had to do to have the sanction lifted.

Respect for students' civil rights does not seem to be of primary concern to the activists, not when they see human rights being abused. The literature of the campus brigades contains definitions of proper and improper speech that smack of thought control by the politically correct. "Stop fantasizing about rape," a group at the University of Wisconsin orders men in a brochure on "a rape-free culture." The Columbia-Barnard Task Force Against Sexual Coercion would restrict "offensive" remarks that "employ sexual stereotypes or generalizations" because they constitute "sexual harassment." A statement issued by the Association of American Colleges' Project on the Status and Education of Women, regarded as a leader on the issue, goes further. Under the rubric "peer harassment," it includes efforts to make women a "negative reference group"; men's domination of class discussions; and a practice called the "elephant walk," in which men expose their penis and pull out their pants pockets to portray an elephant's trunk and ears.

It may be backward to say so, but could it be that there is some charm in such an act? A self-mocking comment on one's own sexuality? When is it harassment and when is it performance art?

The key distinction for the sexual-abuse activists is whether or not an act hurts someone else's feelings. When I asked Heather Earle how to judge whether a fumbling, nonverbalized sexual encounter represented a sexual violation, she said, "I think with clumsy awkwardness . . . the woman probably isn't going to feel violated." Other activists state the corollary: If a "survivor" feels violated, then she has been violated.

This confusion of deed and emotion—and the consequent willingness to regard hurt feelings as a

legitimate cause for political and disciplinary action—runs through many of the activists' arguments. It helps account for REACT's notorious assertion that 125 women are raped at Dartmouth every year—or, as REACT's statement of purpose says, "about one rape every other day!" The statistic comes from a 1989 survey of date rape at Dartmouth. Psychologist Phyllis Riggs, the former coordinator of the school's Sexual Awareness and Abuse Program, found that 8 percent of women reported having "unwanted completed sexual intercourse" during the previous year. (There are about 1,500 women at Dartmouth.) The trouble is that Riggs set out to record *feelings* of being violated: She defined "unwanted" sex to include situations in which a student, while "certain at the time that s/he did not want to engage in the sexual experience . . . did not communicate her/his unwillingness because of a feeling of intimidation."

When a community defines such an act as rape, it is formally recognizing the difference in power between men and women. It is saying, in effect, that all sexual relations take place within the context of potential violence against women. From this it follows that the individual man is always responsible for the general problem, whether or not the woman he is with expresses her fears.

The essence of this code, its underlying chemistry of power and emotion, is summed up in a recommendation from Men Stopping Rape, Inc., a group at the University of Wisconsin: The man who finds himself walking down a street behind a lone woman should go to the other side of the street in order to relieve her entirely reasonable fear that he will rape her.

Even if such an approach reflects some psychological truth, the question remains, What should a college administration, or a state, do about it? Emotion is a much weaker ground on which to define crimes than are acts or statements; deeds can't always be judged by the emotions they elicit. Feelings are not always rational or proportional. They may change over time. And there may be a genuine divide between a man's interpretation

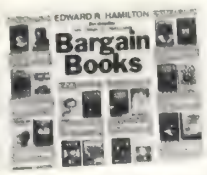
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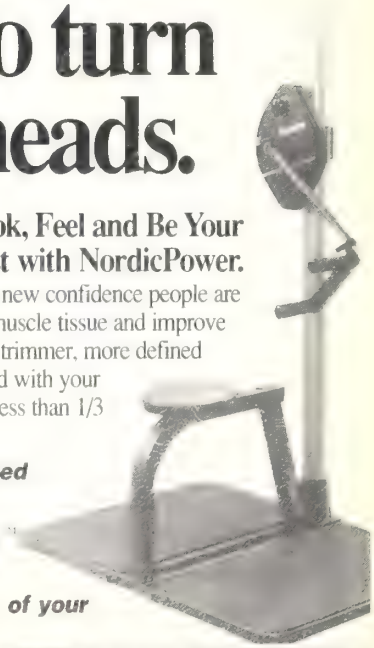
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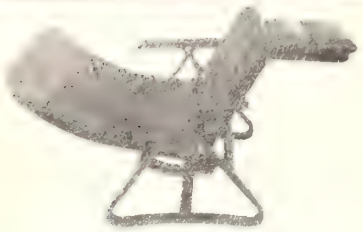
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of an encounter and a woman's.

Moore Robinson's own lack of proportion may well have influenced the Dartmouth administration's disposition of her case. On March 26, 1990, nearly three weeks after the Parkhurst rally, the college broke its policy of not divulging disciplinary proceedings and published the judgment reached by an associate dean, a woman, after a two-and-a-half-hour hearing: Not guilty of abusive behavior. The administration's statements on the case mentioned no names, but just about everyone on campus knew to whom they were referring. And anyway, the next morning's issue of *The Dartmouth* seized the moment to banner Kevin Acker's innocence. Its lead story declared, "Public statement clears 'D' editor." Acker took the opportunity to sound enlightened, even statesmanlike:

"I am not unsympathetic to the issues raised concerning the way sexual assault is viewed in our society," he said. "But I deplore being used as a rallying point to advance awareness. . . . The way that [Robinson] handled this whole matter trivializes a very important topic."

Like many other women who feel that their charges of sexual abuse are not taken seriously by a college administration, Moore Robinson made plans to transfer to another school. (The following fall she went to Brown.) She told me Acker and his friends glared at her and made her uncomfortable on campus, and in one instance a red BMW carrying a group of brothers bumped into her at a crosswalk, knocking her to the ground.

She felt like a "martyr to a cause." The media had presented her case "as if he had stolen a kiss, like in the movie *Carousel*." But three weeks after the matter was dismissed, the college officially informed Acker of new charges against him, charges that were not open to such an innocent interpretation.

One night in February 1990, at about the time REACT was being organized, David Lillard woke up Alma Lee with some news. He'd heard that a '92 was pressing a case against Kevin Acker before the dean's office. Recalling Lee's upset over the "scamming" two and a half years before, he thought she'd want to know.

Alma Lee was by then a junior, a member of a sorority, and a Russian studies major. Lillard's news had a dramatic effect on her. She went to Parkhurst to file a complaint of an assault. An assistant dean urged her to go to Heather Earle first. After she saw the counselor, Lee began talking to friends about the incident at great length, exploring her feelings about it, speaking of her anger, her desire to run Kevin Acker over with a car. In Earle's lexicon, Alma Lee had until now been in the "denial stage," during which a victim tries to "live her life the same way, as if the sexual assault never took place." Denial can last thirty-five years, according to Earle. The counselor helped Lee overcome what the student told me was her "self-guilt" about the incident, her feeling that she was somehow responsible for a violation of her body because she had drunk enough to lower her guard.

Days later Lee acted to "validate" her rage by speaking out at the March 7 rally on the steps of Parkhurst. Her voice is quiet and controlled on the audiotape, but there is enormous feeling behind it. "I could remain anonymous. I could let other people read my words. But when we stay silent the message to the rapist . . . is reconfirmed," she says. "The system is telling him he can do it again and again and again."

Ten days later she walked back into the dean's office with a three-page memo that began: "I am filing a complaint against Kevin Acker '91 for sexual assault." The complaint had a flowing, self-possessed tone that was to characterize all of her subsequent testimony about those moments in the Richardson men's room.

"I was aware that something was off," the statement read in part. "I thought he wanted to cut in front of me [to use the toilet]. I turned around immediately to let him know that I really had to use the toilet: thereby implying that he get out of my stall. . . . I am unclear as to whether or not I actually started to unzip my pants and sit on the toilet to urinate, because he could have already started his advances in kissing me, feeling me

under my bra, putting his hands down my pants, inserting his finger, possibly two, into my vagina. . . .

"Everything seemed to be happening *to* and *at* my body so quickly, it probably lasted all of about three minutes, but my brain was processing the situation so slowly. It was not until he had his fingers in me did I realize that this person was no one that I would ever allow and consent to having his hand down there, especially since he hadn't even asked. As soon as I walked out of the stall, I felt I was walking out of a zone, waking from a nightmare. . . ."

The June 4 hearing of the Committee on Standards—closed, at Acker's request—took place in Parkhurst's South Room: a fireplace, a vast table, and a dozen people in the scrolled-arm Dartmouth armchairs. (I was able to examine a full transcript of the hearing at the Grafton County Courthouse.) The proceedings pitted an immature young man against a very mature young woman. Lee cried several times, but her story didn't substantively change. With Heather Earle at her side, serving as an advocate, Lee explained at greater length that she had been "buzzed"—by the alcohol—and slow to respond.

Kevin Acker responded with legalisms. In a bit of swagger, he chose not to offer a written statement but to speak on his feet. He reminded the committee of the standard of proof—a preponderance of the evidence—and concluded, "It seems to me that the core issue is, Did she say anything to me—if I did make the first move, which is quite possible." He pulled out the report of the polygraph test.

Trying to overcome the sordid flavor of the episode—the ugly locale, the abrupt intimacies—Acker portrayed it as a male fantasy of sudden sex. He called it "a very unique incident in my life . . . the only time something like this has ever happened to me." She had followed him into the men's room. Wordlessly, the two began to embrace. "She took the lead, so to speak, as much as I did." She had led him into the stall. She had sat on his lap and put her hands on his shoulders. She had unzipped his pants and fondled his penis. It might have been

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What are the facts?

■ The concept of "land for peace" is a totally new one in the history of the world. It was formulated for one specific purpose only, namely to persuade and pressure Israel to give up territories that it has administered since the Six-Day War of 1967. By its victory in that war, Israel wound up in possession of these territories. Contrary to what many are led to believe, the "West Bank," the focus of today's attention, had never been part of any Arab country. It was part of Palestine, a territorial unit that, by the Mandate of the League of Nations and in line with the Balfour Declaration, had been designated as a national home for the Jewish people.

■ Thus, while the concept of "land for peace" is a brand-new one, the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself and had really never been questioned before the days of the Israel-Arab conflict. Our own country, of course, following its Manifest Destiny, has benefited greatly and has consolidated its territory by applying this motto. But Israel followed a different path. From the day of victory in 1967, it waited for an offer of peace from the Arabs. But that offer never came. Instead, immediately following the war, the Arabs pronounced their three unalterable "no's:" no recognition, no negotiation, and no peace with Israel.

■ In 1977, President Sadat of Egypt traveled to Jerusalem and presented a peace plan to the Israeli government. The Israelis eagerly embraced his suggestion. In exchange for peace and normalization of relations with its neighbor, Israel returned to Egypt the vast Sinai peninsula, together with the city of Yamit; some of the most advanced military installations in the world; the port and naval installations of Sharm-el-Sheik, which safeguard Israel's access to its port of Eilat; and the oil fields that Israel had developed and which had made Israel self-sufficient in its energy requirements. And, of course, Israel also gave up the natural buffer against aggression that the Suez Canal and the strategic depth of the Sinai itself provided. It was a first in history. Never before in the chronicle of mankind had the victor returned conquered territory to the vanquished in order to attain peace.

■ One would expect that the concept of "land for peace" would work both ways. After all, should not the Arabs also make some territorial sacrifices for peace? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Every inch of land held by the Arabs is considered "holy Arab soil" and its possession by the "infidels" (Christians or Jews) is inadmissible, intolerable, a blasphemy and a case for "jihad" (holy war). No compromise, no concession is ever possible. The way the "Taba issue" was finally resolved further illustrates the Arab belief that the "land for peace" principle is basically a one-way street.

■ The "land for peace" formulation is now applied mostly to the Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza regions. Israel's foes, but also some of its friends, urge Israel to yield these regions to the Arabs, in exchange for "peace." But there is no peace, and no peace will come about by Israel's giving up this area of vital strategic importance to those who are its sworn enemies and who have declared over and over again that they wish to use this land as their launching pad for the final attempt at the destruction of Israel. The conflict in the area is not only between Israel and the "Palestinians." It is first of all between Israel and the Arab nations. With the single exception of Egypt, virtually all of them are still in a state of war with Israel.

To none of the Arab countries has the possibility ever occurred of *their* trading land for peace, for instance yielding the "West Bank" to Israel for the sake of peace. Not one of these countries has even hinted that they would make peace with Israel if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. There isn't even a gesture of accommodation, such as a lifting of the over 40-year-old Arab economic boycott against Israel, an apology for the odious slander that Zionism is Racism, or a discontinuation of the yearly charade in the United Nations, in which the Arab states attempt to expel Israel from that body. For the victor to yield land for peace to the vanquished is a new idea—who knows, it might even be a good one. But it surely would have to work both ways in order to be valid and effective.

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three minutes, but it was probably eight minutes in all before someone else came into the bathroom and they agreed to stop. He had never really talked to her again.

A fifty-four-year-old classics professor on the committee named Edward J. Bradley was thoroughly perplexed. He presumed there would have to have been "already a fairly high level of erotic tension. . . . How can this explode so?"

"She didn't, you know, play with my hair or any of the traditional things you would associate with flirting," Acker said. "But our conversation throughout the entire evening was very pleasant. . . . I think that when she walked into the bathroom I did think . . . that possibly one of the reasons that she had gone in there was to do something like this, especially because it was the men's bathroom. . . . These things are seldom verbally negotiated."

Lee said Acker was lying. And if it was all so pleasant, why did her witnesses say that the incident had stunned her? ("Holding on to my coat and arm determinedly," Craig Rush testified, "she seemed somewhat nervous, almost frightened.")

The Committee of Standards found the hot-sex story implausible, and the next day, June 5, 1990, it announced a guilty verdict on the sex-abuse charge. Acker was suspended for one term. The COS would have considered a multiterm suspension had it not been for "the overall ambiguous nature of the encounter and the lack of clear communication about intentions and expectations on the part of both parties," it said in a public statement. The committee members I spoke to said that the ambiguity sprang from a few facts, on which both parties agreed, that suggested Lee had acquiesced in the early overtures. She'd put her arms on his shoulders, possibly embraced him. But, as the COS statement indicated, she'd been too drunk to express lack of consent; it cited the "presence of alcohol" in its decision to convict.

That night Alma Lee celebrated her victory at a Hanover restaurant.

Acker appealed the verdict, and on July 16, 1990, the COS held a second hearing. This time the student tried to offer an apology, but it turned into something else in his mouth: "I apologize to her now, I'm sorry that she feels bad, but . . . I didn't do anything wrong. If she thinks that I did, then this is what's going on in her mind, it's not what happened."

The committee reaffirmed its judgment, and Acker followed the tradition, established by *Dartmouth Review* students, of taking disciplinary decisions to court. When the Grafton County judge decided not to overturn Dartmouth's decision, Acker appealed to the New Hampshire Supreme Court. He was desperate to return for the the fall term, to pull off the double major and the senior thesis, to ensure the bright future in law school. But the Supreme Court refused to hear Acker's appeal.

By now, Kevin Acker had become the focal point of sexual politics on the Dartmouth campus. After the court hearing, *The Dartmouth Review* filled its front page with a photograph of Acker taken at the courthouse, a slightly blurry picture that caught him with a hint of satisfaction on his full lips. Over his head was the headline SEX OFFENDER in red ink. Five months earlier, the *Review* had observed dryly that REACT wanted nothing less from the administration than "Mr. Acker's head on a silver platter." Now it was performing that service itself.

Acker spent his term of exile in Washington, waiting tables and writing a piece on the Soviet Union for the right-wing *Policy Review*, a publication of The Heritage Foundation, which had made room for many Dartmouth students in the past. By telephone he complained to me that the sex-abuse standard at Dartmouth overlooked the fact that women play an active role in sex. "It is clear that the entire burden to determine whether Ms. Lee was a willing participant in the encounter fell on me."

If a case such as this one could be said to have a winner, it would have to be Alma Lee. She had been on leave when I visited Dartmouth; I spoke to her by telephone after she got back to Hanover in January. She agreed to speak only after I explained that I did not intend to identify her. She told me that the rally on the steps of Parkhurst had marked a turning

point for her. "When I actually spoke it had an incredibly empowering effect." Afterward, the campus had given her enormous support.

The woman on the phone seemed only more mature and focused than the woman of the tape and transcripts. Alma Lee was planning on going to law school, she was going to do what she could on women's issues. She said, "I'd like to direct all the emotions I feel about these things into something that will work in our system, instead of being angry."

The campus Kevin Acker came back to in January 1991 was, on its surface anyway, thoroughly changed. An administration task force was calling for more funds for the Sexual Awareness and Abuse Program. REACT members now spoke of the Dartmouth administration as "progressive." It was easy to see why campuses have historically been so attractive to reformers. Changes really do happen overnight. Compared with the open air of the rest of society, colleges are lab flasks. A few energetic people who know what they believe can turn everything around in a semester.

No doubt Dartmouth is now a more hospitable place for women. Petty assaults are more likely to be rebuked. There will be fewer "atrocities." It's possible that campuses like this one will lead the rest of society to a recognition of the seriousness of date rape.

Of course, one way to accomplish that would be by prosecuting cases such as Acker's in criminal courts rather than before campus committees. The question remains why this was not done in this instance. Alma Lee herself cited New Hampshire's sexual-assault statute during the COS hearings, and Dartmouth later argued in court that Acker's "conduct would constitute aggravated felonious sexual assault."

Quite possibly Alma Lee could have persuaded a jury of that. But both students and administrators at Dartmouth recoiled at the idea of prosecution, in part because victims have a hard enough time confiding in deans, let alone D.A.'s. "They might say, 'I don't want to go in front of an

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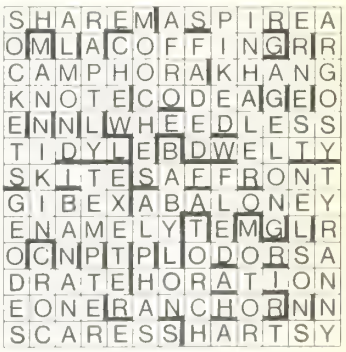


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open courtroom; I'd rather just do it in front of five or seven college people,'" Heather Earle told me. (Of course, no such option is available to the nineteen-year-old who doesn't go to college.) Dean Shanahan explained that a college has to enforce rules in a way that builds consensus, "in a way that is organically connected to the nature of the institution. It has to preserve the very fragile community. It's not like a society where somebody can move from one state to the next. You have to come back into the same classroom, into the same dormitory."

The dean's picture might be more convincing if Kevin Acker had been afforded any such sensitivity. But, of course, his face went up on trees. And the administration not only issued two statements to students on the matter (no names, it's true, but everyone knew to whom they referred) but also mailed the court decisions in the case to reporters. Acker was made a symbol and a cause, forced to endure the opprobrium and publicity of a criminal defendant but without the benefit of the greater thoroughness of a trial. (He could not, for instance, cross-examine witnesses.) There did not seem to be much empathy for Acker as a member of the "fragile community." When I suggested to Heather Earle that a student found guilty of abuse should perhaps be forced to work in a rape clinic, be encouraged to learn from his error, she demurred strongly. She offered the example of "men who assault children," who get their therapy in prison.

If REACT had used the Acker case to promote its agenda, so had the Dartmouth administration. By publicizing its actions, it sought to publicize its new, enlightened image to the world and to clarify norms of sexual interaction among its students. "A consensus . . . is only now emerging about what the elements of abuse are," Shanahan told me last fall. The new rule was, You couldn't go ahead with sex without a "yes." I remembered what Acker had said in court and had to agree. The requirement of a "yes" seemed to skate over the true dynamics of an encounter, the unspoken give-and-take. Over the telephone, Shanahan interpreted the rule for me: "A misreading of my 'No means no' would be to put quotation marks around those words. When we say, 'No means no' and 'The absence of a yes means no,' that doesn't mean the absence of a verbalized yes means no. There is the courting, there is the initiation of an activity, and the response. It's the nature of the response that indicates the yes or the no. For example, if I am engaging in suggestive intimacies with somebody and touch that person, I don't need to get a yes, I don't need to ask permission. That occurs within the context of what's happened just prior to it. What is the response that I get to that? Does that suggest that it is accepted or not?"

The dean's difficulty in spelling out this standard suggests that it is not possible to establish a bright-line distinction between aggressive behavior and sexual abuse; it is a matter of degree.

My conversations with college men and women indicate that, despite the change in the official climate, late-night behavior has not really changed that much. "For society to hold men or women to that standard [an explicit 'yes'] is absurd," said Jim Morris, who served as a senior on the COS that convicted Acker. "There's a social dance that goes on. Passivity you read as acceptance rather than denial." It's easy for Morris to say that now: He graduated last June and lives on the West Coast. Back in Hanover, the new orthodoxy does not encourage such thinking or, at least, speaking.

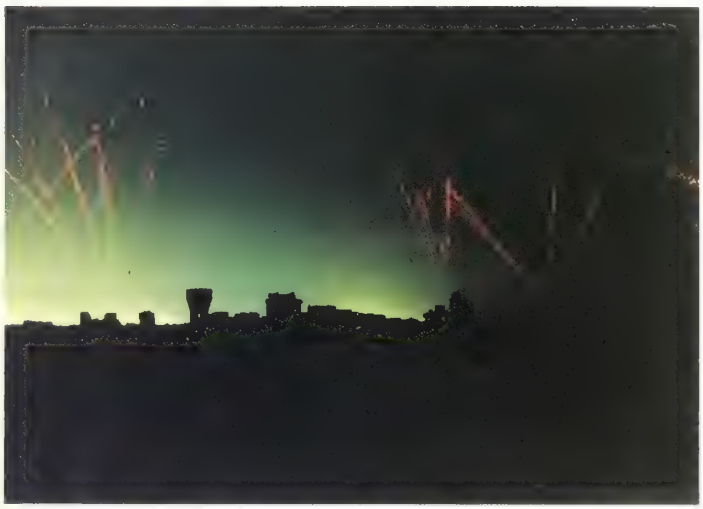
Indeed, the conversation about sexual mores at Dartmouth had become too brittle, and perhaps too fearful, to admit such arguments. "There'd have been an explosion if he had been let off," Morris told me, recalling the atmosphere on campus last spring. The speed and fury with which so many different factions battened on Kevin Acker suggest that he had presented a convenient and irresistible villain. Rather than explore the ambiguities of the issue, it had been much easier for everybody concerned to demonize Kevin Acker, to say, *We're nothing like him.* Kevin Acker, who served so ably in the role of everybody's Other, had brought a certain clarity to a clouded realm. ■

WHEN THE CRUISE MISSILES CAME

In Baghdad on shaky ground

By John Simpson

Tuesday, January 15. Early-morning mist blots out the city. I walk over to the wall calendar and cross off the date: We have reached the United Nations deadline for Iraq to pull out of Kuwait. I decide to go for a long swim in the outdoor pool of the Al-Rasheed Hotel and labor through my twenty lengths like an English Channel freighter in fog.



The water is cooler and dirtier now, and mold is growing between the tiles. Every day fewer members of the hotel staff show up for work. A small lake of sewage has seeped to the surface of the hotel lawn. There is a general smell of decay in the air.

In the last week a feeling of silent despair seems to have settled upon Baghdad. People stay away from their shops and offices. Operators at the central telephone exchange fail to answer for a half hour or more. Even the censor at the television station—a man who has made nearly each day difficult for us for months now—acts as though he has lost all interest. He fiddles with paper clips. His eyes scan the ceiling.

People here have become more outspoken. "It is time now for God to strike Saddam and give us peace," a businessman I meet with tells me in a loud voice. He scarcely bothers to look around. You were always so discreet in the past, I observe. "In the past," he says, "we had no UN deadline."

Another friend of mine here tells me, in a line you might read in *Time* or *Newsweek*: "Iraq is good car with bad driver." He is driving as he says this. He grins at me in the mirror. "Maybe now we change driver."

Demonstrations are under way everywhere. In the northeast of the city 20,000 people pour down the street chanting "Down, down Bush! We will give our lives for Saddam!" It is impressive, until you look closer. The core of the parade is composed of Baath Party members, who capture the attention of the cameramen by singing, dancing, burning flags. The rest of the marchers do very little; at the outer reaches of the crowd, we can see that the demonstrators are simply standing around, waiting to be allowed to return home.

Five days ago I watched the cars carrying the British ambassador and his staff turn the corner and disappear from sight, the drivers beeping their good-byes and everyone relieved to be getting out. The Americans are gone, too. I cannot say I miss Joseph Wilson IV, the chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy here. (He had been the highest-ranking American diplomat in Baghdad, Ambassador April Glaspie having been recalled last summer.) He smoked big cigars and while talking would spit out little flecks of tobacco.

The day before he left he amused

John Simpson is foreign-affairs editor of the BBC.

Photograph from Sygma

tame if with an electronic gadget that insulted people in a squeaky voice. Before departing, he told those journalists planning to stay that they were going to die. I'd heard much the same before from the Americans. "We're leaving because we don't want to be a pound of ground round." "There's gonna be no more level terrain here." "We're goin' to pound these guys so far down you're goin' to have to pipe in the sunlight."



The Iraqi information minister talks war, too, when I visit him in the evening. "Now, at last, we will prove to you that Kuwait is the nineteenth province of Iraq." I bring up the attempt by the French to stave off war with an eleventh-hour diplomatic initiative. "There is an end to diplomatic initiatives," he says, and smiles genially. "We are fully prepared for confrontation."

Wednesday, January 16. At 8:00 A.M.—at the very moment when, eight time zones away, the UN deadline has expired in New York—I am at a pleasantly maintained girls' school, and classes are just beginning. In one class I visit, the girls sit in their neat uniforms and repeat the English words their teacher has written on the blackboard. "I am happy." "You are sad." "They are *gooood.*"

The girls—all Baghdad's children—were to have been evacuated before the UN deadline, but that order had been countermanded, as the speaker of the National Assembly explains today at a press conference. "These children are the sons and daughters of the heroes of the war front. Since their fathers are preparing to be martyrs, they are prepared to be martyrs as well."

It is hard not to suspect that should a missile land on the school the speaker will regard it as excellent propaganda.

Life elsewhere in the city goes on as well. I arrive at the Baghdad Horsemanship Ground in time to see the 4:10 race. The jockeys are spendid in their scarlet, gold, and green silks; the horses appear sharp and spirited in the late-afternoon sun. Hundreds of bettors clamber onto the railings to watch. They wear sports coats over their *dishdashies*, and the flat caps men everywhere seem to sport at the races.

"You are from London?" I turn to find a big, greasy bookmaker smiling and clutching a large wad of twenty-five dinar notes. "What do you think of the situation?" I tell him, but he does not understand my pessimism. He shakes his head and waves his wad of money for emphasis. "There will be no war," he says. "Nobody wants it."

The betting had been heaviest on Scheherazade, and Scheherazade duly wins. At the Baghdad Horsemanship Ground the favorite always seems to.

Things are so normal. How could they change?

Thursday, January 17. The bombing of Baghdad begins twenty-three minutes early—at 2:37 A.M., according to my watch, which I twist in the suddenly garish light. Brilliant red and white tracers erupt in the sky; there are the yellow flashes of surface-to-air missiles. The quiet of the cool night is broken by missiles' roar and the ugly rumble of bombs. It is hard not to flinch at the noise. I remember my grandfather's stories of men driven mad by the bombardment at the Somme.

We had known by midnight that the war was about to begin. Messages were coming through from London, Washington, Paris. By 2:00 A.M. we were planning in earnest. My crew and I decided that it was best to leave the Al-Rasheed: Once the bombing commenced, armed guards were to make sure we remained in the hotel's massive underground shelters.

We had no real idea where to go: Baghdad is a city of the plain, with no high ground to film from. We argued. "No bridges," I shouted to the driver as we screeched out of the hotel gate. Moments later the antiaircraft guns opened up.

We do not remain for long outside the hotel. Our driver, sweat glistening on his face, makes a wild U-turn—he has had enough. He shoots in through the hotel gate and stops.

Inside, in the darkness, angry hands push me into a stairwell, down the stairs, into the lighted shelter. There is the smell of frightened people. Women sob; children wail. Then the lights go out, and there is more screaming.

Normal patterns of behavior are forgotten: A young woman arrives in a coat and bath towel. She undresses in the middle of the crowd, and no one takes notice.

It is impossible, fifty feet below ground, to hear what is happening above us, outside—although it does seem as if the building quivers a bit from time to time. I decide I have to get upstairs. My cameraman and I take a chance and manage to break past a guard.

The upper floors are pitch dark. We grope our way along a corridor, trying to find our office. I hear the murmur of voices and we are let in. Out in the hallway someone is calling my name loudly: A security man has followed me up from the shelter. To spare a general search of the office, I head back out of the room, where I'm found by the yellow beam of a flashlight. I see another door, partly opened, to my left and slip into that room. Exploding flak outside reveals I am in a suite of rooms that someone else is using as an office.

I lock myself in a bedroom at the end of the suite. Lying on the floor I watch the handle slowly turn. The security man bangs on the door and shouts my name. But this hotel was constructed during the war with Iran to withstand missile attacks; the doors are tough. He goes away.

There is a short-wave radio by the

Photograph from Sygma

bedside, and I turn it on. From far away I listen to President Bush explain what is happening outside the window. Around 5:45 A.M. I fall asleep.

I am awakened at nine by more banging on the door. It is my producer, Eamonn, and he has managed to set up our satellite telephone downstairs. Eamonn moves the delicate white parasol until it locks onto the satellite. I dial the BBC in London, and I soon hear the cool, agreeable voice of the operator.

Baghdad has lost most of its electricity and all of its communications. From my hotel window upstairs I can see that the telecommunications tower has been badly damaged—satellite dishes hang limply from it—power stations have been destroyed, government ministries wrecked. Later, when we head briefly out of the hotel, the sight is extraordinary: Despite the night's bombing and destruction, the only sign of damage I see in the surrounding streets is a broken window at the Ministry of Trade. The streets are empty, save for soldiers trying to hitch rides.

Back at the hotel, while I am putting together a report on the previous night's events, someone shouts that a cruise missile is passing the window. It is traveling perhaps 500 mph, following the line of the main road, making little noise and trailing no exhaust. At a traffic light it turns left.

In the evening we receive information from Washington that our hotel has been targeted. We had noticed that with darkness there had come a group of men wearing black overalls. They had set up several radar-guided SAM launchers on the hotel's grounds. We spend the night in the shelter. It is noisy, smelly, and cold. I pull a flak jacket over me for warmth and I sleep.

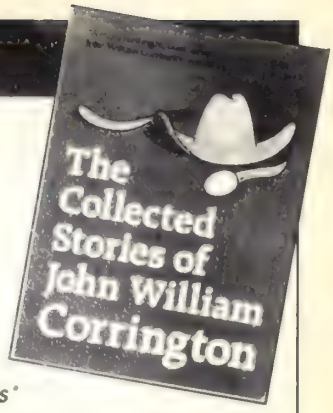
Friday, January 18. A B-52 attack. The noise of the bombing slowly ripples toward us across the afternoon sky, and then the nearby antiaircraft guns open up, their shells invisible in the daylight. Puffs and curls of white smoke hang between the clouds. The rumble from the falling bombs shakes the ground and ripples the water in

Continued on page 78

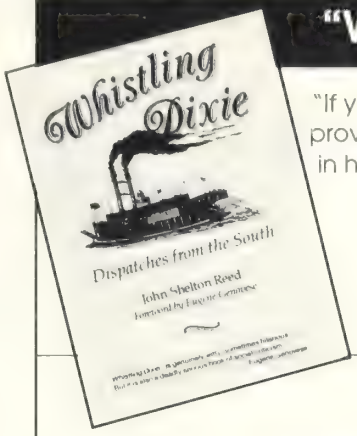
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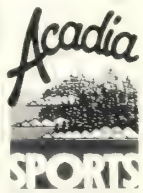
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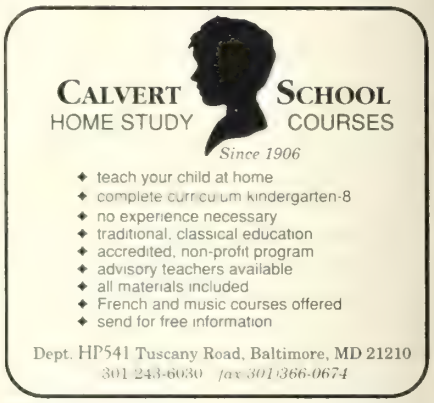
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Continued from page 75

the stagnant pool of sewage near our phone dish.

A heavy machine-gun bullet whistles past and flattens itself on the steps nearby.

Saturday, January 19. In the afternoon three cruise missiles together pass across the front of the hotel, turn the corner, and pass back along the rear. One of them is shot down by antiaircraft fire and crashes into the staff quarters of the hotel. No one is hurt—everyone is in the shelter. And the missile—perhaps because it is "smart" and knows that it is in the wrong place—does not explode.

The hotel pool is showered with debris. No more swimming there.

At any rate, we are going to have to leave. The Ministry of Information—which knows that allowing Western journalists to remain in Baghdad, reporting on what the bombs hit, is a fairly good way to protect civilians—has fought a spirited rearguard action on our behalf. But the Security Ministry has been determined to get rid of us on the grounds that we have been acting as artillery spotters for allied bombers, informing the outside world which military targets have been hit and which are still standing.

Some talk of barricading themselves in their rooms. However, we are told politely but firmly that any such action would be most unwise, as the order to pack has come directly from the president's office. Having cracked a couple of ribs during one bombing raid, I do my best to convince an Iraqi doctor to declare me unfit for travel. It does not work.

Sunday, January 20. The stench from the lavatories of the still-occupied rooms in the Al-Rasheed is awful. The remaining staffers, like the other ordinary Iraqis we are able to see, seem to be living in a state of shock. They had never really believed this war would come.

We drive out of Baghdad, through the suburbs, toward the border with Jordan. We pass the big communications building and defense installations that have been hit; they look like cans of corned beef that have been split open with a chisel.

We also pass a restaurant that I had gone to on New Year's Eve. There had been a big party that night, a frenetic affair, with people wearing masks, climbing onto tables, spraying one another with foam. Young girls danced with portly men, with their boyfriends, with one another. Partygoers gathered around me and the crew, shook our hands, kissed us.

An old man, bald and fat, sat watching a woman across the table whom I took to be his daughter. She bounced a baby on her knee and made it clap its pudgy hands in time to the music. The old man stared, and as he did tears ran unchecked down his fat gray cheeks.

The restaurant appears deserted now. It is just another silent, shabby building, in a suburb of a city expecting its next air raid any minute. ■

April Index Sources

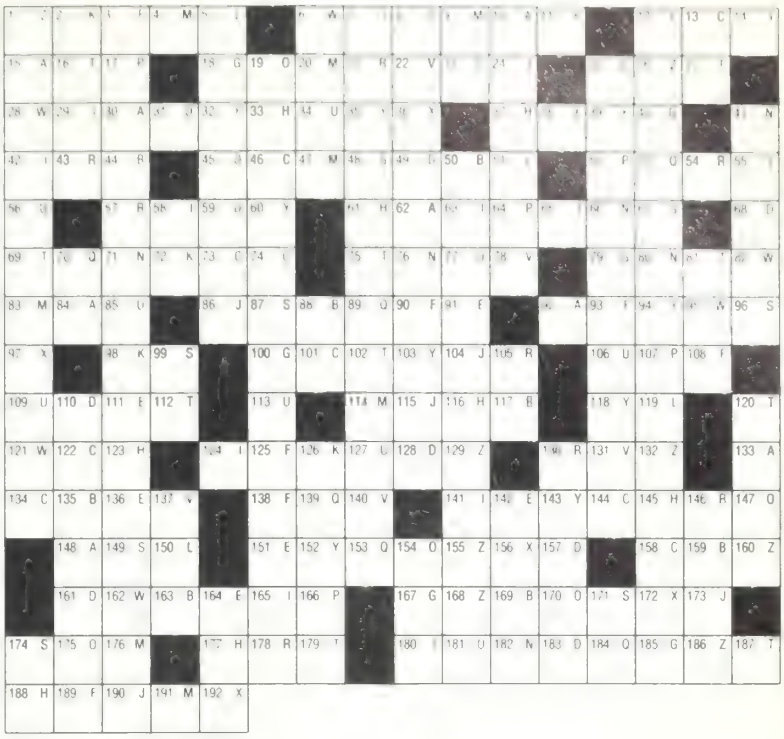
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 100

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 71.



CLUES WORDS

A. 1938 Eng. play by Patrick Hamilton that ran in N.Y. as *Angel Street*
30 148 84 62 15
10 92 133

B. Common, ordinary
50 88 44 159 163
135 169 117

C. Jack Kerouac's "beat generation" novel (3 wds.)
134 13 73 46 101
23 122 158 144

D. Fold, bend back
68 183 161 157 8 49 110 40
128

E. Pregnant
91 142 136 111 164 151

F. Outflow
125 3 93 32 39 138 189 108
90

G. Vain, affected, dandified
79 18 185 100 48 67 167

H. Most droll or brilliant
123 33 116 37 61 145 188 177

I. That cannot be overcome
180 165 24 58 141 65 29 42
124 14 7

J. "Ballads, songs, and snatches, / And dreamy____" (Gilbert, *The Mikado*)
63 115 104 86 55 190 173

K. Boor
72 98 2 126

L. Complication, difficulty, as in a play
5 119 150 12 51

M. First, second, third, etc.
47 176 114 83 9 4 191 20

N. Unconfirmed stories
182 71 41 80 76 66

O. Afr. country on the Gulf of Guinea; cap., Abidjan
154 170 77 181 19 45 175 31
74 147

P. Cap. of East Flanders, Belgium
166 107 17 64 52

Q. Elevators, tackles, devices for lifting
139 53 89 184 153 70

R. "She wish'd / That heaven had made her such a man; she ____" (contr. & wd., *Othello*)
21 178 130 146 43 54 57 105

S. Brit. term for lunch
96 171 174 99 87 149

T. Ga. swamp, home of Walt Kelly's Pogo
81 16 69 75 112 187 102 120
179 27

U. Trapdoor openings
85 25 127 59 109 106 113 56
34

V. Adversary
22 131 140 78 137

W. Poetic term for England
162 82 6 95 28 121

X. Boozers
172 156 36 38 192 97

Y. Signal of approval (2 wds.)
118 60 152 35 94 11 143 103

Z. Eng. city on the Wye; breed of cattle
1 163 159 160 155 186 26 132

PUZZLE

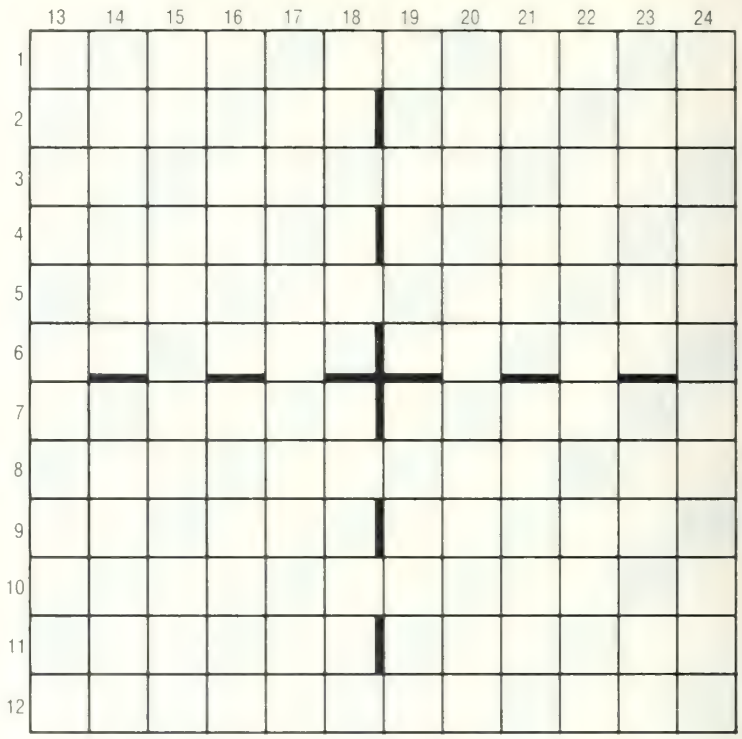
Single Occupancy

by E. R. Galli
and Richard Maltby Jr.

The shaded squares in the diagram contain a letter which appears in only one "light" (diagram entry). If it appears in the Across light, the Down light simply skips over it, and vice versa.

Lights are clued by row and column. If two lights appear in a row or column, they are clued together without a break between them; the length of each appears in parentheses, in the order in which each is clued . . . which is not necessarily the order of entry.

Clue answers include four proper names; 8A is less than common. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 71.



Across

1. Killjoy Norm works endlessly without error (11, *two words*)
2. Lament $1,000 put into disastrous card game held by backgammon team (5,5)
3. Back places for shooting marshals again (9)
4. Simple material—not quite privy to rest, Democrat told tales (5,4)
5. Concerning far-out travel, possibly in tin autocars (11)
6. Sap once captured by surly MP he-men denied concealing fix (5,5)
7. Particulars confused in *Times* advertisement getting lady totally burned up (5,5)
8. Plant hay randomly around oriental dwarf rose hybrid (9)
9. American poet upset Northern European, putting Reagan over Nixon almost (5,6)
10. Notice R. E. Lee's replotted campaign (11)
11. Grief hurries princess going after soft velvet (5,5)
12. Long-drawn-out gag ruined during modest party by the onset of giggling (9, *hyph.*)

Down

13. The quality of the stout provides fortification in dessert wines (10)
14. Horsepower low in reverse, and pep fouled up by my going around double curve (5,5)
15. Storage pit needs what fans do, merchant said (10, *two words*)
16. Greek sorceress seemed eager, somewhat cut back, tense, and on edge (5,4)
17. A-cup, popular first sign of girl's shrinking (10)
18. Date's awfully fed up, longing to keep me from Arab state (5,5)
19. Picket is not bright, broadcasting strikes in a rig (4,6)
20. There's something fatuous about hunch that's cut short . . . and something terribly cruel (10)
21. Famous rock group's beginning to soften sounds or cut range (6,5)
22. Foreign Legion hoped to be classified (11)
23. Submarine going through treacherously icy run capsized on middle of tide (4,5)
24. By the Sound, noticed those who plant junipers (9, *two words*)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Single Occupancy," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the June issue. Winners of the February puzzle, "Valentine," are Arthur Danese, Fredonia, New York; Ralph Holmgren, Provo, Utah; and Robert Shimp, North Augusta, South Carolina.

1 May

Breyten Breytenbach: Africa's Exiles

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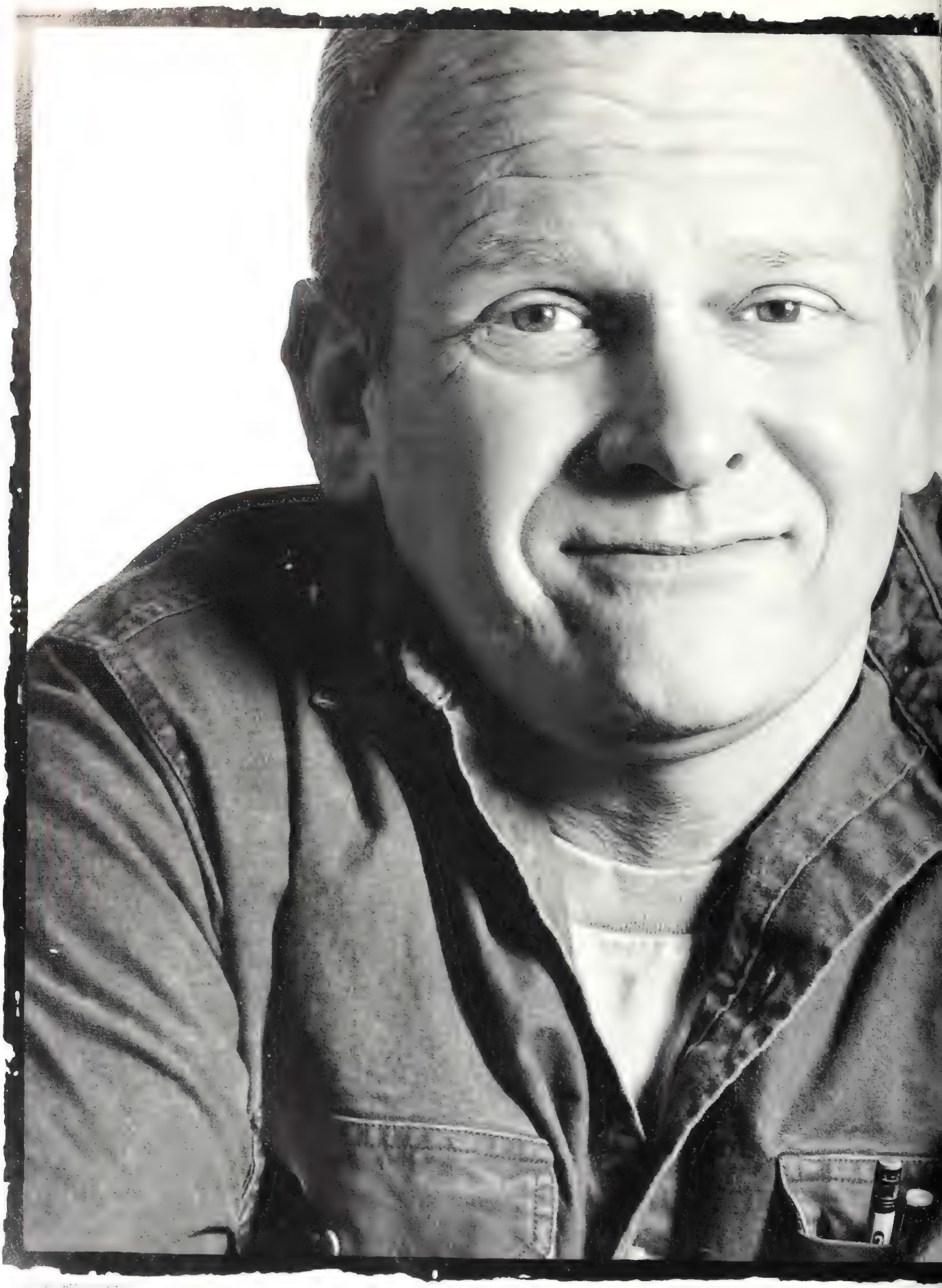
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What Is It? Whose Is It?
Richard Barnet *Ian Buruma* *Owen Harries*

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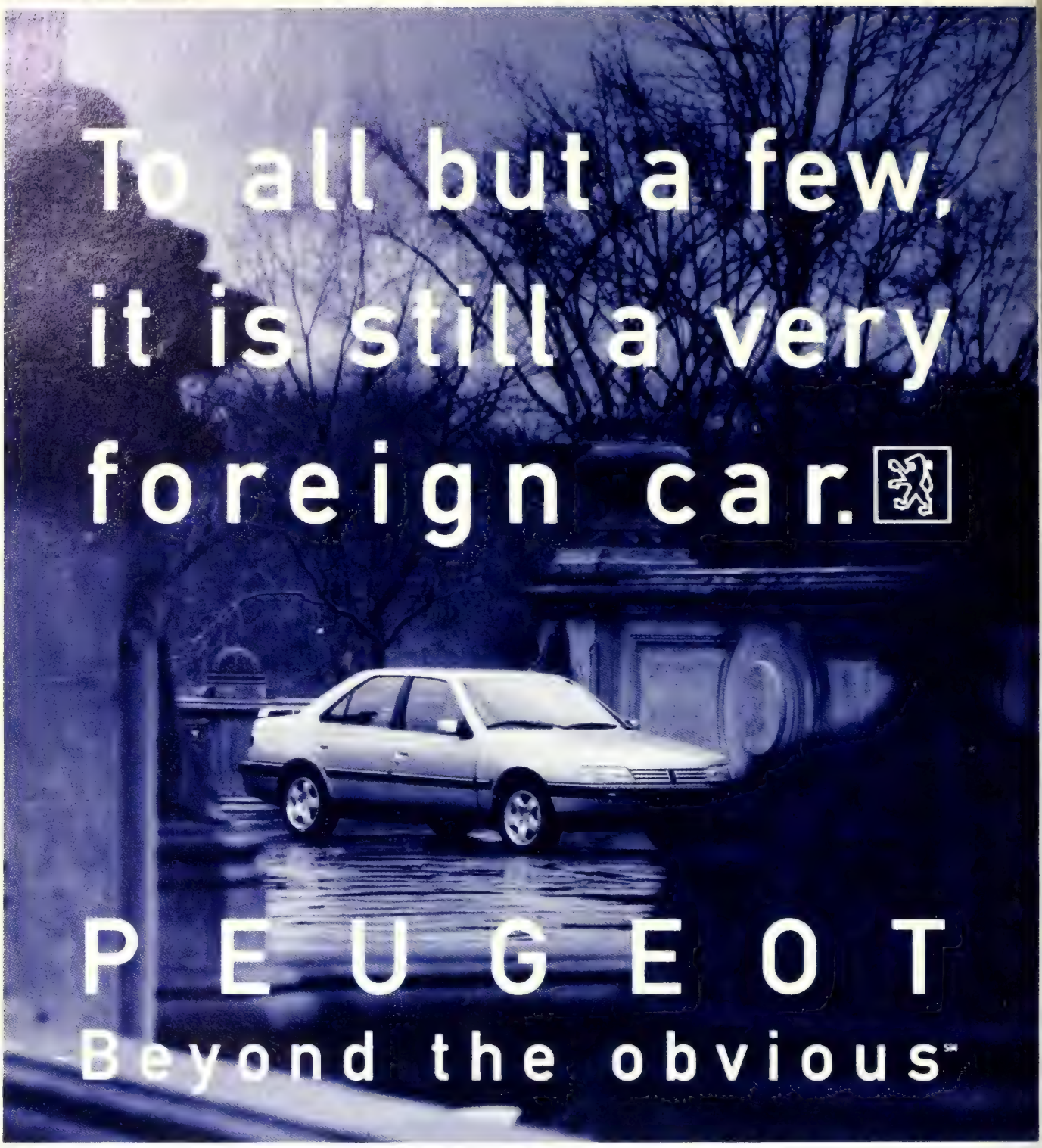
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LETTERS

The Sense of Duty

The February forum "Who Owes What to Whom? Drafting a Constitutional Bill of Duties," should have been advertised as a decadent Puritans' convention. With political scientist Benjamin Barber playing the role of Edmund Burke to historian Christopher Lasch's Thomas Hobbes, and with Missoula mayor Dan Kemmis modestly weighing in as the Voice of Nature, we learned, yet again, that the great unwashed are an irresponsible, childlike lot who have gotten out of control. We also learned again that said rabble gravely need the discipline of the bayonet (Lasch) or the pulpit (Barber). And still again, we learned that the nation is graced by the presence of wise Moral Philosophers (guess who?) who know what is best for said rabble and who are graciously willing to pick up said bayonet or ascend said pulpit.

Let us ignore for the moment the fact that these "insights" have been proposed by every reactionary American elite from the time the Federalists accused Voltaire's ghost of fomenting radical individualism in Kentucky. Let us also not dwell on the paradox that Montana mayors were celebrating such insights even while I was growing up in that state in the McCarthyist 1950s. Let us ponder, rather, why it is that the American upper middle classes (after two decades of greed and managerial incompetence exceeded in magnitude only by their incomes) are so eager to blame the country's problems on the great unwashed but never on themselves. Let us also marvel at the way humanities and social-science professors, shaken by two decades of stagnant funding and persistent ideological crises, have of late been retreading themselves as experts in Moral Discipline in order to pander to this burgeoning zeitgeist.

Benjamin Barber, for example, has elsewhere directed Olympian sneers at the "anonymous hysteria" of ordinary people, forever "chasing jobs, life-styles, material goods, sexual partners, and fashionable principles." Accordingly, when he worries that we vulgar proles need to learn responsibility, does he actually mean that his hysterical Puritan loathing of us should become the driving force of public policy? Likewise, Christopher Lasch has been devoting his middle age to cursing the Enlightenment and growling over the fact that pushy, limitless "individualism" has not yet been shackled to the noble anchor of "community." Could it be that what really motivates him, however, is a fear that academic *Kultur*mandarins like him may lose their accustomed powers in a plebianized *Zivilisation*? Inquire into thine own heart, *Geisteswissenschaftler*, before speaking of others' sins! Are such Weimarish

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anxieties the true foundation for the forum panel's nostalgia for small God-fearing Montana towns—that is, for the fabled ability of these "communities" to ensure uniform, predictable, elite-respecting behavior—what panelist Christopher Stone euphemistically described as "shame"?

What is clear, in short, is that the forum panelists scrupulously avoided discussing the nature of their own "responsibility" and their own "duties." Nor should this be a surprise. The only time American upper-middle-class elites give a damn about either is when their social weight or their pocketbook is threatened. In America "community" is a code word for controlling people, not empowering them. Indeed, Lasch arrogantly admits as much when he states that entitlements only encourage the disease of individualism, whereas "community" inoculates against it.

When modernity-shocked mandarins or Montana "good families" look at "community," therefore, what they generally see is a wish projection of their *own* radical individualism. When they say that they want to empower communities rather than individuals, what they actually mean is that their (morally superior) material interests should take precedence over the "anonymous hysteria" of the lesser breeds. To the son of a working-poor family raised in Montana in the 1950s, by way of contrast, the thought of "community" conjures up rather different sensations. It invokes memories, for example, of how the local police genuflected before smugly self-superior mayors and town merchants, but suspiciously scrutinized my family whenever we drove by in our ancient Ford. Yet, if I understand the forum panelists' neo-Malthusian musings correctly, this is exactly how it should have been.

Ronald P. S. Mahler
St. Paul, Minn.

The February forum had the effect of resurrecting a ghost. Several of your participants suggested that a rhetoric of duty or "responsibility" has not been part of political discussion recently in America. In fact, the issue of individual responsibility to the com-

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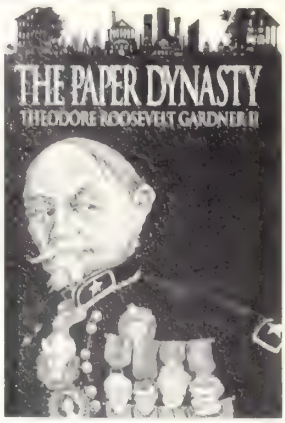
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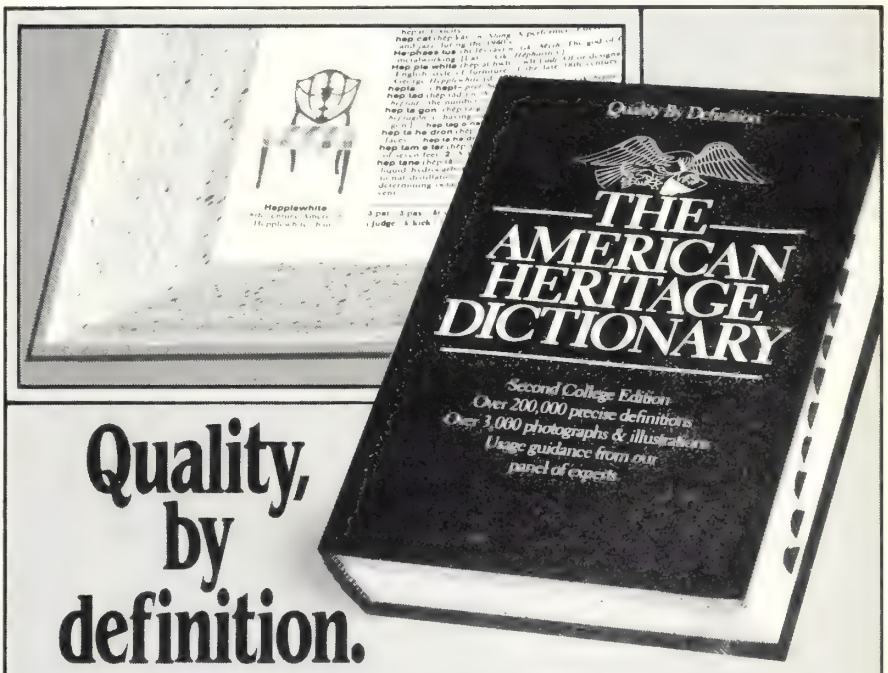


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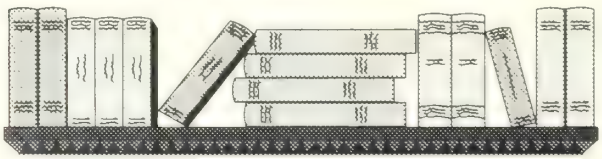
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munity was raised only fifty years ago, during the first year of U.S. participation in World War II, and it was raised quite publicly.

In 1942, at the height of his political career, Henry A. Wallace, then Franklin Roosevelt's vice president—and to many Americans the standard-bearer of New Deal liberalism—explicitly called for a "Bill of Duties" and articulated various tenets for it. There was even a list of "Four Duties," corresponding to Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms," in Wallace's most famous address, "The Price of Free World Victory."

I recall Wallace not to suggest that all those who look for the advent of an American communitarian spirit should invoke his name. I mention him rather by way of asking why this discussion has lain dormant for a half century, following Wallace's descent into political oblivion after his ill-fated third-party run for the presidency in 1948. The reason lies, I suspect, in a shadow that hung virtually unnoticed at the edges of the forum. It was nearly recognized when moderator Gerald Marzorati mentioned Václav Havel's recent insistence on communal responsibility in Czechoslovakia. The shadow was also present in Benjamin Barber's response to Marzorati, in which he recollected the positive reception of Havel's remarks, juxtaposing that with Jimmy Carter's failed "malaise" speech of 1979. This penumbra, implied by the fifty-year gap between your forum and Henry Wallace's discourse of the early Forties, was, of course, the Cold War.

Since the Cold War now seems to be fading into history, Americans of widely divergent political views are beginning to address this question of communal responsibility, with its corollary critique of unfettered individual freedom. Perhaps the absence of these topics from public discussion has been due to our participation in an attenuated conflict with the Soviet Union, a foe that seemed to epitomize collectivization and thus to threaten, above all else, individual freedom. That the present debate over the individual's civic duties arises after such a hiatus strongly suggests that our cultural obsession with individual rights was somehow bound up with our cor-

responding and equally obsessive fear of the Soviets and international communism. Barber's mention of Jimmy Carter's failed attempt to resurrect the ideal of civic responsibility underscores this point when we remember that Carter was run out of office by a Ronald Reagan intent on, and temporarily successful at, revitalizing the Cold War.

Henry Wallace was forced from public office in 1946, essentially because of his call for moderation in U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. When his leaving government was compounded by the debacle of his 1948 presidential campaign, a whole range of issues, both foreign and domestic, was swept from the table. The championing of a communitarian spirit would likely have drawn character attacks as well as an investigation for disloyalty, despite the fact—which your forum participants well noted—that the duty of the individual to the community was a vital issue to the Founding Fathers. What arose in America after 1946 was more a Cold War–generated preclusion of debate than the "consensus" it has been called. Thus it is only now, with the fading of the Cold War, that issues such as the ones raised by your forum can be broached again.

The importance for Americans of the problematic democratization of Eastern Europe is not just that these nations are setting for the United States an example of the attainment of a civil society. More importantly, it's that the recent global political changes—allowing Poles, Czechs, and others to re-create their nations—have perhaps (it is hoped) given us enough of a sense of safety to ease our own sensitivity regarding individual rights and allowed us to begin to consider the other, communitarian, side of the social coin.

Mark L. Kleinman
La Jolla, Calif.

The purpose of the February forum was to explore possible changes in legislation that would elicit greater citizen responsibility. As a worker at a domestic-violence shelter, I read Christopher Lasch's proposal that "in the case of couples with children un-



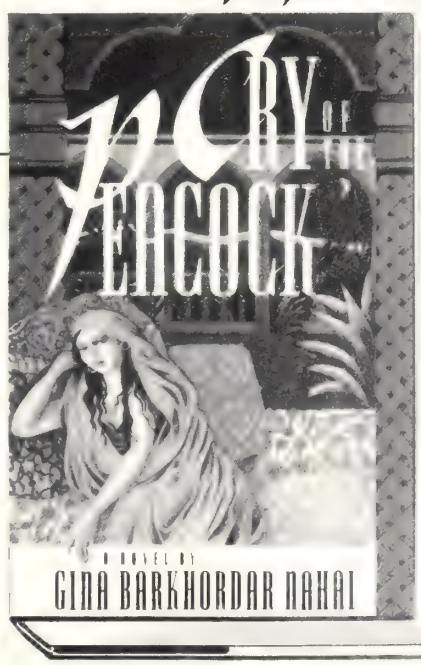
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der the age of twenty-one, divorce is hereby forbidden" with absolute horror. Does Lasch have any idea what family life often consists of? The hell he would condemn many women and children to live in? Does he care?

Lasch contends, "We know . . . that divorce is bad for kids." That's often true, but it is also true that in some cases divorce has been not only constructive for kids but also a lifesaver. Lasch distorts research that indicates children are affected in the long term by divorce yet also shows that the severity of the impact can be altered by how the divorce is handled. His line of thought is potentially detrimental to the children he claims to care for, but he does not even pretend concern for the adults he would trap in dysfunctional marriages. Shouldn't the well-being of adults count, too?

There is no question that women would suffer disproportionately if divorce were made impossible or extremely difficult to obtain. Many women have used the threat of divorce to negotiate fair treatment to save a marriage. Husbands may explore extramarital sex without censure, while wives risk loss of custody of children and social condemnation if they seek solace outside marriage. Under Lasch's system, a trapped wife would be much more trapped than her spouse. If a couple remained together, miserable, for Lasch's twenty-one years, the male would still be available, by society's standards, and could even begin a new family. Such options would be much narrower for the wife. No doubt, as a male, Lasch has considered such factors.

Forcing people to remain married against their will is not in the best interests of children, women, men, or society. Such a proposal is the kind of thinking best left to a totalitarian society.

Doris B. Wilson
Lyman, S.C.

Rockefeller-bashing has been a favorite sport in twentieth-century America, but even polemics ought to build on, not contradict, the facts. Benjamin Barber, one of your forum participants, says of John D. Rockefeller Sr. that he "made a lot of money, and he gave a little away when he was older. The language of duty tripped easily off the tongues of Gilded Age capitalists, particularly toward the end of their lives."

This hardly squares with the record, as described in Raymond B. Fosdick's history of the Rockefeller Foundation: "The famous 'Ledger A' which [Rockefeller] kept in his teens when he secured his first job as a clerk in Cleveland, a job which paid him six dollars a month, shows that he gave away six percent of his total wage to the Sunday school and various missions related to his church interests."

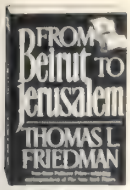
At that early age and at that rate of pay he could hardly have been "compensating" for his "greedy pursuits," as Barber suggests. Nor, with all due respect to Professor Christopher Stone, could Rockefeller have been seeking to preempt "Congress from taking his money through a graduated income tax"—there was no federal income tax until 1913, and Ledger A dates from before the Civil War.

Whatever may have been the balance between commercial sins and philanthropic virtues in John D. Rockefeller, he did not come to the belief in and practice of philanthropy late in life. At the least it is misleading to say that he "made a lot" and "gave a little away." Between 1901 and 1918, he created four charitable trusts, including the Rockefeller Foundation, to which he gave during his lifetime nearly half a billion dollars, calculated at market price on the day of the donation in all cases. And this does not include the tens of millions with which he founded the University of Chicago in the 1890s.

Granted, such philanthropy will never solve all of the nation's problems nor substitute for that loss of a sense of citizen obligation to the public good that Messrs. Barber, Stone, and their colleagues on the panel rightly bemoan. On the other hand, no country has as highly developed a philanthropic sector as ours. For his part in creating that tradition, Rockefeller deserves something better than the snide dismissal he got from your experts in civic virtue.

Richard W. Lyman
Stanford, Calif.

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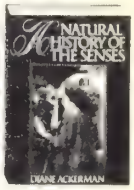
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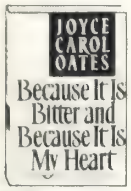
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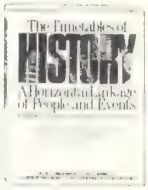
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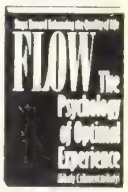
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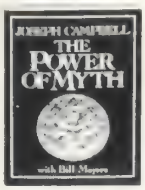
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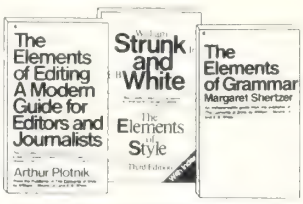
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NOTEBOOK

Trained seals and sitting ducks

By Lewis H. Lapham

Journalism consists in buying white paper at two cents a pound and selling it at ten cents a pound.

—Charles A. Dana

Between the two campaigns waged by the American military command last winter in the Arabian desert—one against the Iraqi army and the other against the American media—it's hard to know which resulted in the more brilliant victory. Both campaigns made use of similar tactics (superior logistics, deception, control of the systems of communication), and both were directed at enemies so pitiably weak that their defeat was a foregone conclusion.

The bombardment of Baghdad began on January 17, and within a matter of hours the newspaper and television correspondents abandoned any claim or pretension to the power of independent thought. It was as if they had instantly enlisted in the ranks of an elite regiment, sworn to protect and defend whatever they were told to protect and defend by the generals who presented them with their morning film clips and their three or four paragraphs of yesterday's news.

By the end of the first week I no longer could bear to watch the televised briefings from Washington and Riyadh. The journalists admitted to the presence of authority were so obviously afraid of giving offense that they reminded me of prisoners of war. The parallel images appeared on cue five weeks later when what was left of the Iraqi army stumbled across the desert waving the white rags of surrender.

The Iraqi troops at least had suffered the admonitions of gunfire. The American media surrendered to a barrage of propaganda before the first F-16 fired its first round at an Iraqi military target. The Pentagon's invitation to the war carried with it a number of conditions—no reporters allowed on the battlefield except under strict supervision, and then only in small task forces designated as "press pools"; all dispatches submitted to the military censors for prior review; no unauthorized conversations with the allied troops; any violation of the rules punishable by expulsion from the theater in the sand.

The media accepted the conditions with scarcely a murmur of protest or complaint. Who could afford to decline even so ungracious an invitation? The promise of blood brings with it the gift of headlines, audiences, single-copy sales, Nielsen ratings, Pulitzer prizes, and a swelling of the media's self-esteem. A television network on assignment to a war imagines itself outfitted with the trappings of immortality. The pictures, for once, mean something, and everybody has something important to say.

On the fourth day of the bombing Dan Rather confirmed the Pentagon's contemptuous opinion of a media cheaply bought for a rating point and a flag. He appeared on a CBS News broadcast with Connie Chung, and after reading the day's bulletin, he said, "Connie, I'm told that this program is being seen [by the troops] in Saudi Arabia. . . . And I know you would join me in giving our young men and women out there a salute." Rather then turned to the camera and raised his right hand to his forehead in a slightly awkward but unmistakably earnest military salute.

The salute established the tone of the media's grateful attendance at what everybody was pleased to call a war. Had anybody been concerned with the accurate use of words, the destruction of Iraq and the slaughter of an unknown number of Iraqis—maybe 50,000, maybe 150,000—might have been more precisely described as a police raid, as the violent suppression of a mob, as an exemplary lesson in the uses of major-league terrorism. Although the Iraqi army had been much advertised as a synonym for evil (as cruel as it was "battle-hardened," possessed of demonic weapons and a fanatic's wish for death, etc.), it proved, within a matter of hours, to consist of half-starved recruits, as scared as they were poorly armed, only too glad to give up their weapons for a cup of rainwater.

But the American media, like the American military commanders, weren't interested in the accuracy of words. They were interested in the accuracy of bombs, and by whatever name one wanted to call the Pentagon's trade show in the Persian

Gulf, it undoubtedly was made for television. The parade of images combined the thrill of explosions with the wonder of technology. Who had ever seen—live and in color—such splendid displays of artillery fire? Who could fail to marvel at the sight of doomed buildings framed in the glass eye of an incoming missile? Who had ever seen the light of the Last Judgment coursing through a biblical sky?

Most of the American correspondents in Saudi Arabia experienced the war at more or less the same remove as the television audience in Omaha or Culver City. They saw little or nothing of the battlefield, which was classified top secret and declared off-limits to the American public on whose behalf the war presumably was being waged. The military command provided the media with government-issue images roughly equivalent to the publicity stills handed around to gossip columnists on location with a Hollywood film company. Every now and then the government press agents arranged brief interviews with members of the cast—a pilot who could be relied upon to say hello to all the wonderful folks who made the plane and the ordnance, a nurse who missed her six-month-old son in Georgia, an infantry sergeant (preferably black) who had discovered that nothing was more precious than freedom. But even this kind of good news was subject to official suspicion. A reporter who said of some pilots that the excitement upon returning from a mission had made them "giddy" found the word changed to "proud."

The Pentagon produced and directed the war as a television miniseries based loosely on Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, with a script that borrowed elements of *Monday Night Football*, *The A Team*, and *Revenge of the Nerds*. The synchronization with prime-time entertainment was particularly striking on Super Bowl Sunday. ABC News intercut its coverage of the game in progress in Tampa with news of the bombing in progress in the Middle East, and the transitions seemed entirely in keeping with the spirit of both events. The newscasters were indistinguishable from the sportscasters, all of them drawing diagrams in chalk and talking in similar voices about the flight of a forward pass or the flare of a Patriot missile. The football players knelt to pray for a field goal, and the Disneyland halftime singers performed the rites of purification meant to sanctify the killing in the desert.

The televised images defined the war as a game, and the military command in Riyadh was careful to approve only those bits and pieces of film that sustained the illusion of a playing field (safe, bloodless, and abstract) on which American soldier-athletes performed feats of matchless daring and skill.

Like the sportscasters in the glass booth on the fifty-yard line, the newscasters standing in front of the palm tree or the minaret understood themselves to be guests of the management. Just as it never would occur to Frank Gifford to question the procedures of the National Foot-

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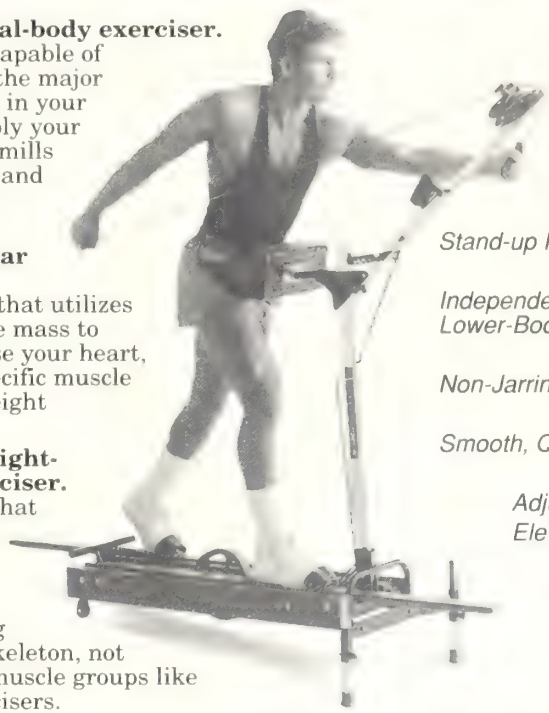
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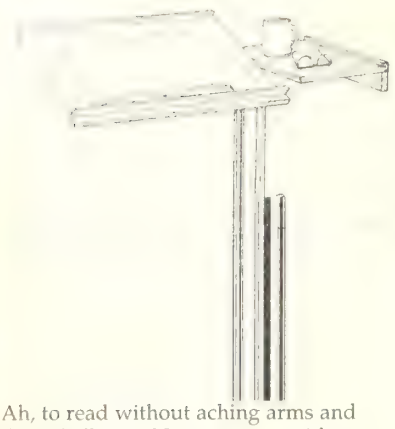
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ball League, so also it never occurred to Tom Brokaw to question the ground rules of the war. When an NBC correspondent in Israel made the mistake of talking to New York about an Iraqi missile falling on Tel Aviv without first submitting his news to the local censors, the Israeli government punished his impudence by shutting down the network's uplink to the satellite. The embargo remained in force until Brokaw, at the opening of *NBC Nightly News*, apologized to Israel for the network's tactlessness.

Between representatives of competing news organizations the protocol was seldom so polite. The arguments were about access—who got to see whom, when, why, and for how long—and the correspondents were apt to be as jealous of their small privileges as the hangers-on attached to the entourage of Vanilla Ice. When Robert Fisk, a reporter for the British paper *The Independent*, arrived at the scene of the fighting for the town of Khafji, he was confronted by an NBC television reporter—a licensed member of the day's press pool—who resented the intrusion. "You asshole," the television correspondent said. "You'll prevent us from working. You're not allowed here. Get out. Go back to Dhahran." The outraged nuncio from NBC summoned an American Marine public affairs officer, who said to Fisk, "You're not allowed to talk to U.S. Marines, and they're not allowed to talk to you."

Even under the best of circumstances, however, print was no match for television. The pictures shaped the way the story was told in the papers, the newsmagazines, and the smaller journals of dissenting opinion. Although a fair number of writers (politicians as well as scholars and plain citizens) took issue with the Bush administration's conduct of the war, their objections couldn't stand up to the heavy-caliber imagery delivered from Saudi Arabia in sorties as effective as the ones flown by the tactical fighter squadrons. *Time* and *Newsweek* followed the pictures with an assault of sententious rhetoric—"The greatest

feat of arms since World War II... Like Hannibal at Cannae or Napoleon on a very good day."

At the end as in the beginning, the bulk of the writing about the events in the Persian Gulf was distinguished by its historical carelessness and its grotesque hyperbole. The record strongly suggests that the Bush administration resolved to go to war as early as last August, almost as soon as Saddam Hussein made the mistake of invading Kuwait. If the war could be quickly and easily won, then the administration might gain a number of extremely desirable ends, among them the control of the international oil price, a revivification of the American military budget, a diversion of public attention from the sorrows of the domestic economy, a further degradation of what passes for the nation's political opposition, a cure for the mood of pessimism that supposedly had been undermining Washington's claims to world empire.

But none of these happy events could be brought to pass unless a credulous and jingoistic press could convince the American people that Hussein was a villain as monstrous as Adolf Hitler, that his army was all but invincible, that the fate of nations (not to mention the destiny of mankind) trembled in the balance of decision. It wouldn't do any good to send the grand armada to the Persian Gulf if the American people thought that the heavy guns were being wheeled into line to blow away a small-time thug.

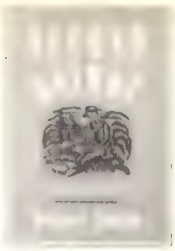
The trick was to make the sitting duck look like the 6,000-pound gorilla. Much later in the proceedings Lieutenant General Thomas Kelly could afford to say, amidst applause and self-satisfied laughter at the daily press briefing at the Pentagon, that, yes, sending B-52's to carpet bomb a single Iraqi Scud site was, come to think of it, "a delightful way to kill a fly." But in the beginning the generals were a good deal more careful about the work of disinformation. By October, Washington was besieged with ominous reports—about Hussein's chemical and biological weapons,



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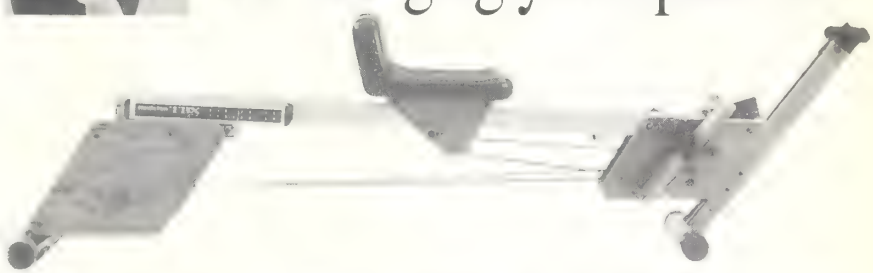
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t the price of oil rising to $50 0 a barrel, about the nuclear fire likely to consume the orchards of Israel, about the many thousands of body bags being sent to Saudi Arabia to collect the American dead. All the reports derived from government sources, and all of them proved to be grossly exaggerated.

The advantage of hindsight suggests that President Bush and his advisers chose Saddam Hussein as a target of opportunity precisely because they knew that his threats were mostly bluster and his army more bluntly described as a gang of thieves. The media never subjected the administration's statements to cross-examination, in large part because the administration so deftly promoted the fiction of a "liberal press" bent on the spiteful negation of America's most cherished truths. The major American media are about as liberal as Ronald Reagan or the late John Wayne, but in the popular mind they enjoy a reputation (undeserved but persistent) for radicalism, sedition, and dissent. The administration well understood that the media couldn't afford to offend the profoundly conservative sympathies of their prime-time audience, and so it knew that it could rely on the media's complicity in almost any deception dressed up in patriotic costume. But for the purposes of the autumn sales campaign it was necessary to cast the media as an antagonist as un-American as Saddam Hussein. If even the well-known "liberal press" could be brought into camp, then clearly the administration's cause was just.

The media loved the story lines (especially the ones about their own dread magnificence), and by Christmas every network and every magazine of respectable size had designed for itself some kind of red, white, and blue emblem proclaiming its ceaseless vigilance and its readiness for war. When the steel rain at last began to fall during the second week of January, most of the national voices raised in opposition to the war had been, as the Pentagon spokesmen liked to say, "attrited." Through the five weeks of the aerial bombardment and the four days of the ground assault the version of the public discourse presented in the media turned increasingly callow. *Time* and *Newsweek* published posters of the weapons deployed in the Persian Gulf, and the newspapers gave over the majority of their editorial-page space to columnists gloating about the joy of kicking ass and kicking butt. Andy Rooney on *60 Minutes* struck what had become the media's preferred note of smug self-congratulation. "This war in the Gulf," he said, "has been, by all odds, the best war in modern history. Not only for America but for the whole world, including Iraq probably. It was short and the objectives of victory were honorable. In spite of all the placards, the blood was not for oil. It was for freedom. We did the right thing."

The return of the nation's mercenary army was staged as a homecom-



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But more importantly, at BASF, we never forget the effect we have on the world we live in. Our employees have a strong

ing weekend for a college football team, and the troops arriving in Georgia and California found themselves proclaimed, in the words of *Life* magazine, "Heroes All." Many of them had spent several uncomfortable months camping in the desert, but few of them had taken part in any fighting. The number of American casualties (125 dead in action, twenty-three of them killed by "friendly fire") once again posed the question of whether America had gone to a war or to a war game played with live ammunition. But it was a question that few people cared to ask or answer.

Maybe the question is irrelevant. In the postmodern world maybe war will come to be understood as a performing art, made for television and promoted as spectacle. Maybe, as the producers of the charades on MTV would have it, Madonna is Marilyn Monroe, true love is a perfume bottle, and George Bush is Winston Churchill.

Certainly the administration succeeded in accomplishing what seemed to be its primary objectives. The cost of oil went down, and the prices on the New York Stock Exchange (among them the prices paid for Time Warner, the Washington Post Company, CNN, and the *New York Times*) went up. The country welcomed the easy victories in Kuwait and Iraq with band music, ticker-tape parades, and speeches to the effect that once again it was good to be American.

Still, I find it hard to believe that the American people feel quite as triumphant as they have been made to appear in the newsmagazines. The cheering rings a little hollow, as if too many people in the crowd were shouting down the intimations of their own mortality. The elation seemed more like a feeling of relief—relief that so few Americans were killed and that almost everybody, this time at least, got home safely.

Maybe the war in the desert was a brilliant success when measured by the cynical criteria of realpolitik, but realpolitik is by definition a deadly and autocratic means of gaining a not very noble end. The means might be necessary, but they are seldom admirable and almost never a cause for joyous thanksgiving. If we celebrate a policy rooted in violence, intrigue, coercion, and fear, then how do we hold to our higher hopes and aspirations? We debase our own best principles if we believe the gaudy lies and congratulate ourselves for killing an unknown number of people whom we care neither to know nor to count. How do we tell the difference between our victories and our defeats unless we insist that our media make the effort of asking questions other than the ones that flatter the vanity of the commanding general? Like the seal balancing the red, white, and blue ball on the end of its faithful nose, a servile press is a circus act, as loudly and laughingly cheered by a military dictatorship as by a democratic republic. ■



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HARPER'S INDEX

Average ratio of U.S. funds spent fighting a war to U.S. funds spent on that war's veterans' benefits : 1:3

Number of Americans who received veterans' benefits last year for a relative's service in the Civil War : 51

Death rate, since last August, for American military personnel stationed in the Persian Gulf, per 100,000 : 69

Death rate for men between the ages of 20 and 30 living in the United States since last August, per 100,000 : 104

Rank of 1991, among years in which the U.S. State Department has warned Americans to avoid the most countries : 1

Number of people who applied to the United States for political asylum last year : 101,000

Number who applied in 1979 : 1,000

Number of Soviet Jews who were hired by Israeli manufacturers last year : 12,000

Number of Palestinians who have been laid off by Israeli manufacturers this year : 8,500

Number of countries in which more than half the population is Muslim : 36

Percentage of the population of Kuwait in 1989 who were domestic servants : 25

Number of plastic garbage bags the U.S. Army has estimated will be needed to clean up Kuwait, per month : 1,500,000

Percentage change in federal funding for energy conservation proposed by President Bush this year : −36

Number of the solar panels installed on the White House roof by President Carter that are still there : 0

Portion of all cars that will have a microwave oven in the year 2000, according to the Campbell Soup Company : 1/4

Rank of Fords, among the cars most often bought by Asian-Americans : 1

Size of one traffic jam in Tokyo last year, in miles : 84

Number of malls that will open in Japan this year, per month : 6

Chances that an employed American works in a shopping center or mall : 1 in 11

Percentage of fast-food restaurant workers who admit to doing "slow, sloppy work on purpose" : 22

Rank of the Navajo tribe, among the largest suppliers of potatoes to Frito-Lay : 1

Number of times a nude or seminude woman accepted a Domino's Pizza delivery in Washington, D.C., last year : 15

Chances that a female inmate in an American prison is a mother : 4 in 5

Portion of Hallmark's 1,200 different Mother's Day cards that do not include the word "mother" or "mom" : 4/5

Number of articles in the *New York Times* this year that have included the phrase "mother of all" : 29

Number of photographs of Gulf War casualties in the Associated Press photo library : 28

Number of U.S. AIDS deaths last year, expressed as a portion of all U.S. AIDS deaths since 1981 : 1/3

Percentage of U.S. hospitals that do not require that patients be told if they test positive for the AIDS virus : 25

Average percentage of disposable income that an American spent on insurance premiums in 1984 : 4

Average percentage today : 7

Ratio of the total personal debt owed by Americans to the total federal debt : 1:1

Total amount of unclaimed private funds held by state agencies : $5,839,676,660

Percentage change, since 1989, in total assets held by U.S. banks that the FDIC considers "threatened" : +73

Fee a Norwood, Massachusetts, bank requires from depositors before they can ask a question about their account : $1

Price of a 2-week session for high school students at the National Law Camp in Miami Shores, Florida : $1,450

Price of a 4-week session at the World Peace Camp for Teens, in Poland Spring, Maine : $1,500

Price of a pair of fluorescent, bulletproof, desert-camouflage jeans from Neiman Marcus : $800

Estimated amount that Boston Red Sox pitcher Roger Clemens will earn this season, per strikeout : $20,400

Amount of time it takes to handstitch a major league baseball, in minutes : 11

Figures cited are the latest available as of March 1991. Sources are listed on page 70.
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READINGS

[Transcript]

INFLUENCE: A BUYER'S GUIDE

Below is an excerpt from a seventy-six page transcript of a meeting held on October 4, 1990, between Representative Jim Meredith, then the Republican majority leader in the Arizona State House of Representatives, and Joseph Stedino, a former Las Vegas talk-show host posing as "J. Anthony Vincent," a Nevada casino operator seeking the legalization of gambling in Arizona. From January 1, 1990, to January 31, 1991, Stedino played the central role in an undercover sting operation by the Phoenix police and the Maricopa County Attorney's Office to investigate corruption among Arizona state legislators; he was paid $42,000 a year for his undercover work. As "Vincent," Stedino established a network of lobbyists and legislators to oversee the passage of the pro-gambling legislation. In February sixteen people involved in the scheme, including seven state legislators, were indicted; Meredith, charged with accepting bribes, money laundering, and violating campaign-finance laws, was among them. The transcript of this meeting, which took place in Vincent's Phoenix office, was cited as evidence against Meredith in the government's indictment. Although his lawyers asserted in February that Meredith's actions during the October 4 meeting were "part of the traditional job of a majority leader . . . [and] the way government works," Meredith resigned his seat and pleaded guilty to a reduced charge in March.

"I, ANTHONY VINCENT": Jim, I'm not going to kid you. Of the people that I've sat with—'cause I told you the other day, I've been very selective and discreet about who I sit with—you're probably the most important person, based on your leadership seat. And I would hate to see you lose that.

REPRESENTATIVE JIM MEREDITH: Yeah.

VINCENT: I mean, if I am fortunate enough to have a majority leader in the House that's saying, Hey, I can vote yes on this issue with no problem, then I know that my bill is not going to get shelved.

REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.

VINCENT: That's an important guy to me.

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah.

VINCENT: I mean, let's just tell it like it is. Having a friend in that position—if I may be, you know, liberal enough to call you a friend at this point—that is paramount to me.

REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.

VINCENT: The green lights [yes votes] are important, but to think that the majority leader has the power to shelve my bill for ten years—

REP. MEREDITH: That's true.

VINCENT: It's frightening.

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah.

VINCENT: And, see, I come from a state where things are done (*snaps fingers*) quickly. Don [Kenney, the Arizona representative who introduced Meredith and Vincent] knows some of the people that I'm affiliated with over there. I think he mentioned Harry Reid to you, who's a United States senator now. I mean, Christ, I can call Harry and talk to him the way I would talk to a Dutch uncle.

REP. MEREDITH: Sure.

VINCENT: But that's based on many years of friendship, and it started off the way our friendship started off.

REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.

VINCENT: He was with the Gaming Commission, and we had lunch one day, and I needed some things, he needed some things, and everything came together and you have a friendship.

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah.

VINCENT: That nurtures and grows.

REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.

VINCENT: And, uh, what do you see as a possible threat to you that could cause you to lose that leadership position?

REP. MEREDITH: Well, the worst-case scenario is that as many as eighteen [Republican represen-

tatives] that I call ultraconservative would go against my leadership only because I'm not conservative enough. [The House majority leader is elected by the members of his party's caucus.]
VINCENT: But, Jim, as far as you and I—
REP. MEREDITH: I'm not worried about that.
VINCENT: All I would ask is that I have your promise that you'll vote yes on my issue and that you won't shelve it.
REP. MEREDITH: Yeah, I won't shelve it. It'll go. As long as you've got the votes it'll go.
VINCENT: But you gotta vote also.
REP. MEREDITH: Oh yeah, I gotta vote.
VINCENT: Um, all right, Jim, if you're going to help me, then I want to help you. It's important to me. I want to help you any way I can, and I want you to keep your leadership position. That's the bottom line.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.
VINCENT: You know, that's the way it is. I wish I could tell you that my heart and soul belong to Arizona, but this is a billion-dollar industry.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.
VINCENT: I'm not saying I'm the messiah and I have all the answers for this state, but I sure as hell can tell you that within a five-year period of the legislation being passed, you're looking at between $500 million and $1 billion in taxes.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm. Mmm-hmm.
VINCENT: So tell me how I can help you and what I can do for Jim Meredith that's going to make Jim happy and maintain his seat, because that's what I want to do.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm. Well, we need to support some Republicans [candidates who, if elected, would vote for Meredith for majority leader].
VINCENT: Okay. I have your list here, by the way. [*Reading*] Mike Gilbert.
REP. MEREDITH: Yeah, he needs money.
VINCENT: Okay.
REP. MEREDITH: That's where I just came from, meeting with Mike, and I told him that I'd get some outside money. He's one of my supporters, and he's one that I need in there.
VINCENT: All right— John Greene.
REP. MEREDITH: Just put him down as a supporter; he doesn't need any money.
VINCENT: Okay.
[*They discuss other candidates on Meredith's list.*]
VINCENT: Okay, now, they would all support you for your leadership position, correct?
REP. MEREDITH: That's why I'm helping them. We need to get them elected.
VINCENT: Okay, what else? Or who else?
REP. MEREDITH: Fife Symington [the Republican candidate for governor]. Why couldn't you go to this thing [a fund-raising dinner for Symington]?
VINCENT: Oh, I want to go, yeah. I told you I wanted to go.
REP. MEREDITH: Sit at my table, and that'll give you a chance to get to know Fife.
VINCENT: How many of these [tickets] do you need [me to buy]?
REP. MEREDITH: It's your call.
VINCENT: Would it help you if I took four?
REP. MEREDITH: Absolutely. Absolutely.
VINCENT: You want the name of the person that's going to be with me?
REP. MEREDITH: Yes, that's what I need.
VINCENT: It's going to be me and Shiree Foster [a staff assistant at the Arizona Chamber of Commerce].
REP. MEREDITH: Shiree? That's a different name.
VINCENT: So that comes to what, uh, $2,200.
[*He hands Meredith $2,200 in cash.*]
REP. MEREDITH: Don't you have a checkbook? It's always money?
VINCENT: See if there's twenty-two there.
REP. MEREDITH: Don't you have a checkbook? Jesus Christ. I'm running around with $2,200.
VINCENT: Jim, please, try to understand the way I live. I live in a different world. I carry $20,000 or $30,000 at all times. I'm sorry. I can't help that. That's just the way I live.
(*Meredith laughs.*)
VINCENT: It's just my style.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.
VINCENT: Where's my tickets? You're going to [seat] me with you, right?
REP. MEREDITH: Yeah. That way I can introduce you directly to Fife.
VINCENT: Well, that's good. At least Fife will know that I cared enough to spend $2,200 for an $8 dinner.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm. (*Laughs*) That's right.
VINCENT: So now back to Jim Meredith and what we can do to help Jim Meredith maintain his leadership seat and get these people on your side. What do we need to do?
REP. MEREDITH: Well, as far as myself, I'm fine [Meredith was running unopposed in his district]. I just need to get money to help my Republicans.
VINCENT: Now, I don't have any problem with that at all. I mean, it's—it's—I have a slight problem. The money isn't the problem.
REP. MEREDITH: All right.
VINCENT: Uh— (*laughs*). This is embarrassing, but it's true. This is where you and I have to come to what we call in Italian a "little marriage."
(*Meredith laughs.*)
VINCENT: Um— I'm maxed out. [Vincent has already contributed the legal limit of $2,200 that an individual can give to candidates in Arizona.]
REP. MEREDITH: Oh.

[Farm Equipment]

HOG HEAVEN



The hog oilers pictured above were part of an exhibition last fall at the University of Northern Iowa Gallery of Art in Cedar Falls. These cast-iron devices, which release oil when hogs rub against them, were invented by midwestern farmers at the turn of the century to protect their hogs from parasites; the oil coats the hogs' skin, suffocating lice and mites. The oilers in the show are from the collection of Robert and Louise Coates of Deerfield, Wisconsin.

VINCENT: I'm maxed out.

REP. MEREDITH: What about using, uh, Shiree's name?

VINCENT: Fine.

REP. MEREDITH: Why don't we do that?

VINCENT: Okay.

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah, this is what everybody is having to do. They're having their kids give money; they're having their uncles— I mean, this is the way of life with the stupid Prop 200 [Proposition 200, the 1986 Arizona campaign-finance law, which limits each individual's annual contributions to $220 per candidate and a total of $2,200]. It's the pits.

VINCENT: I met with one legislator that was in trouble and needed money for the primary, and, Christ, I was down to the family dog.

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah.

VINCENT: I mean, how far do I want to go?

REP. MEREDITH: If you can use [Shiree], I would need her name and address—basically, that's it.

VINCENT: I'll get her address. [*Vincent calls Shiree Foster's office and leaves a message.*] Who's next?

REP. MEREDITH: Well, if you can come up with another name for Mike Gilbert—

VINCENT: I have eight names.

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah.

VINCENT: These are people that are sworn to me under the cloak of secrecy.

REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.

VINCENT: Do you remember the old show with Don Adams, *Get Smart*, where the cone of silence used to come down?

REP. MEREDITH: *Get Smart*, yeah.

VINCENT: So what do each of these [candidates] need? I'll give you names, and let's get it over with. Gary Richardson. What do you want to give him? Whatever you want to give him you got it.

REP. MEREDITH: I think if we can—If we can come up with another person and go with a double shot for him, perhaps, that would be plenty.

VINCENT: Four hundred and forty? All right.

REP. MEREDITH: He should be able to get through on that.

VINCENT: Four forty, Gary Richardson. [*Phone rings. Vincent answers.*] Hi, Shiree. How you doing? Listen, you haven't given any money to any political candidates, have you? Okay. So you don't have a problem with giving $880 to a poli-

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*Excludes vehicles built for Chrysler imports, Laser, Talon, Premier, Monaco, Summit. †Depending on model. **Protects engine, powertrain and against outer body rust-through. See 7/70 limited warranty and its restrictions at dealers. †† J.D. Power and Associates, 1987-1990 Customer Satisfaction with Product Quality and Dealer Service. sm 1986-1989 passenger cars.

So this January we introduced the first available minivan air bag. The minivan driver's air bag must be used with the seat belt to be fully effective. The two together will provide the level of safety we're talking about.

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Consider the safety options we make available† A visor phone you can talk into without taking your hands off the wheel. A remote keyless entry system when it's dark and scary. An electrochromatic rear-view mirror that dims automatically to reduce glare. Speed-sensitive locks that lock themselves. Heated outside power mirrors to get rid of freezeover. Wiper air foils to keep your windshield clear, even in a downpour. And how about bumpers that exceed government regulations.

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In the early eighties, the American car industry made a mockery of "made in America." And we paid the price. A big price.

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And for the ultimate benefit of the consumer.

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Whether stated publicly or implied, every car company has made a commitment to quality. Or satisfaction. Or both. And we're all doing everything we can to make good on that promise. If we didn't, the customer would put us out of business in a hurry.

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Lee Iacocca

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[...uitment Brochure]

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tician? All right. Good. Where are you registered to vote here?

REP. MEREDITH: What's her home address?

VINCENT: What's your home address? Oh, and another thing, before I forget: Are you available on October 11 to go to a dinner with me for Fife Symington? Okay, 'cause I just spent $550 on your ticket. I can't imagine what they're going to serve for $550, but the guy I'm sitting with says it's going to be Spam and crackers.

(*Meredith laughs.*)

VINCENT: Thanks, Shiree. And you could give a little more money if I needed you to, right? Thank you. Bye. (*Hangs up.*) She can give more money. She hasn't donated anything.

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah.

VINCENT: All right, we're at Mike Gilbert. What do you want me to give him?

REP. MEREDITH: If we can get him a couple thousand.

VINCENT: Two grand.

REP. MEREDITH: Oh yeah, that would—

VINCENT: Okay.

[*They discuss contributions for the other legislators totaling $7,040.*]

VINCENT: Okay, total mine up and see if you get $7,040. Are these [names of "contributors"] okay on a piece of paper?

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah, I just need names and addresses.

VINCENT: No problem. Okay, so Mr. and Mrs. Gary Jensen, 16437 North Thirty-first Street. Let's have them give $440 to Richardson.

REP. MEREDITH: Richardson [*writing*]. I'm assuming you cleared this with these people (*laughs*).

VINCENT: Oh yeah, yeah.

REP. MEREDITH: All right.

VINCENT: No, these are all future employees.

REP. MEREDITH: Yeah, yeah, okay.

VINCENT: I mean, they're with me all the way.

REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.

VINCENT: I have carte blanche with their names, and they wouldn't donate to political campaigns, so if they get a call—Did you give any money?—they know to say yes.

REP. MEREDITH: Okay, good.

VINCENT: I wonder if I—Yeah, I could probably use my niece too.

REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.

[*They continue to match names with legislators. Vincent gives Meredith $7,100 in cash.*]

VINCENT: Let's total them up one more time and see what we get. You should get $7,040, but I don't want to influence you. Did you want another soft drink?

REP. MEREDITH: No, thank you, I'm fine. That's exactly what I got: $7,040.

VINCENT: Okay.

REP. MEREDITH: That's it.

VINCENT: So Jim, you understand that I won't

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From Manscape With Beasts, *a collection of photographs by Barbara Norfleet, published by Harry N. Abrams. This photograph was taken in a dump on Martha's Vineyard. Norfleet's work will be shown at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston through July.*

be bothering you; I won't be chasing you.
REP. MEREDITH: Yes, I know.
VINCENT: You know the game.
REP. MEREDITH: And you're doing the right thing.
VINCENT: I don't bother people. I want to hear from you. If somebody needs help, I'm here. I want to help those who are going to help me.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.
VINCENT: And I gotta get every yes vote I can.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.
VINCENT: But understand that I do expect you to vote yes, and I do expect you not to shelve me. So that's why I want to get you back into that—You want a rubber band?
REP. MEREDITH: Yeah.
VINCENT: That's what I use for a money clip—I've gotta keep you in that leadership seat, is the way I see it. Otherwise, I could end up shelved.
REP. MEREDITH: This is going to help. And if something comes up where I need additional help, I'll come up with some names and we'll meet again.
VINCENT: I need one last thing.
REP. MEREDITH: Give it to me.
VINCENT: In case anybody should ever ask me, what did I do for you?
REP. MEREDITH: As far as these [candidates], you haven't done anything for them, okay?
VINCENT: Are you going to let them know I'm involved, or are you just going to give this to them? I don't care—It's up to you.
REP. MEREDITH: Yeah, um—
VINCENT: Because I figure you can talk to them later and say, "Remember when I helped you."
REP. MEREDITH: Right, that's kind of what I had planned on doing. It's just kind of—That way it keeps people from getting nervous about it.
VINCENT: Keep them calm.
REP. MEREDITH: And this looks like I've really gone out of my way, because I individually go to these people.
VINCENT: You'll remember who these people are, and they're going to remember who you are. I mean, you walk in with $7,000 and change, and they're going to say, "We remember you, because you were there for me."
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm.
VINCENT: So that puts us in a position to get this green button pushed when the time comes.
REP. MEREDITH: Mmm-hmm. Mmm-hmm.

[Following this meeting, Meredith purchased cashier's checks for the candidates discussed above in the names of the "contributors" that "Vincent" had given him. Four of the six candidates that Meredith helped were elected on November 6; Mike Gilbert was defeated. Fife Symington was elected governor. Meredith lost his bid for the post of majority leader, but was chosen by the members of the Republican caucus as majority representative for reapportionment.]

[Reverse-Speech Analysis]

CNN'S HIDDEN MEANINGS

From "Operation Desert Storm," in the February issue of Backtalk, *the journal of the Reverse Speech Education and Research Institute in Dallas. According to the journal, "Reverse Speech is based on the premise that as people speak, at least two complementary messages are simultaneously being delivered; one message is presented forward and the other in reverse. . . . The forward speech conveys conscious . . . communication, while the reversals simultaneously convey communications from the unconscious mind." For the analysis below, David J. Oates, the founder of Reverse Speech Technology, taped news reports aired on CNN during the first thirty minutes of the Allied air attack on Iraq and listened to them both forward and backward. His interpretation of the reversals of the phrases in italics are shown beneath the forward text.*

PETER ARNETT [Baghdad]: "Oops! Now there's *something on fire.* That was an explosion fairly near our location at, er, *near a mosque downtown.* We could sort of feel the report *from that.*"
REVERSALS: *I've known it.*
I'm lonely. I'm worried.
Damn them!

PETER ARNETT: "*Well, the anti-aircraft* fire has died down, and it seems to me that there's been *at least three waves* of aircraft here so far."
REVERSALS: *Fucking Arab.*
We fucked Arab.

PETER ARNETT: "*But as I said, farther out* in the city, on the outskirts of the city, there seem to be *more explosions taking place, multiple explosions.*"
REVERSALS: *Hey, listen! Fire love.*
Shell with the bomb. Help me get results.

PETER ARNETT: "*Indeed. It's quiet over* there too. But I think it's probably just a lull *as President Bush follows* through his threat in an attempt to prove to Saddam Hussein that he should leave Kuwait."
REVERSALS: *They ousted Eden.*
Don't shoot them. Nuke them.

CHARLES JACO [Dhahran]: "*The war with Iraq* began early Tuesday morning as a squadron of U.S. *fighter-bombers took off from* the largest U.S. air base in central Saudi Arabia."
REVERSALS: *Now with the whirlwind.*
Don't want to fuck with you.

CHARLES JACO: "The military here in Saudi Arabia has *no further information.* They say all briefings will probably come from Riyadh."
REVERSAL: *War is here. Ashamed of me.*

PETER ARNETT: "We have yet to see the bombs fall, but it's the same pattern of the previous *at least three raids* that we have witnessed."
REVERSAL: *We're stupid. Get used to it.*

JOHN HOLLIMAN [Baghdad]: "The flames might be high, *but the tracer bullets are still going* up into the sky."
REVERSAL: *I know I'd waste it. Bomb Jerusalem.*

JOHN HOLLIMAN: "The anti-aircraft *fire is now going toward the south.* We're looking *out to the west* and we *see the tracer bullets going.*"
REVERSALS: *To hell with it.*
The bastards don't know it's Fonzie.
Don't tell 'em it's yesterday.

JOHN HOLLIMAN: "*We've seen these bombs come down before.*"
REVERSAL: *Bomb them often. I must love in Hebrew.*

[Apology]

BACKING UP AS FAST AS I CAN

From a letter sent last October by Jerry MacDonald, executive officer of the Canadian Wire Service Guild, to Claude Labrecque, an executive with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Ottawa.

Dear Claude,

It has been brought to my attention that a letter sent to you on October 12, 1990, was addressed to you with the greeting "Dear Asshole." This was done inadvertently. I do apologize for this.

A draft of this letter was retyped verbatim by my new secretary, who did not realize that I occasionally use humorous nicknames in drafts of official correspondence. I fully accept the responsibility of this going out and again apologize for this becoming part of the formal document. I hope you will understand that occasionally an inside joke can go beyond its intended audience. I meant no formal disrespect. As you well know, Claude, if I had anything disrespectful to say, I would say it to your face.

With regrets for any embarrassment that I have caused, I remain,

Yours respectfully,
Jerry E. MacDonald

[Long Ideas]

THE RELATIONSHIP IS IN THE MAIL (I)

From the instruction booklet for the Military Edition of The Write Connection Program, a letter-writing kit for military parents who are deployed away from their children. The kit was created by Positive Parenting, a Phoenix, Arizona, company, at the request of the United States Navy. It contains stationery, envelopes, stickers, and a writing schedule. Positive Parenting sells the kits by mail for $19.95; last October the company donated 6,000 kits to members of the armed services stationed in the Persian Gulf. The instructions advise writers to use the material below "as idea starters."

Month	*Note*	*Picture*	*P.S.*
January	Tell about your coldest day.	Draw your favorite snowman's face.	Keep warm!
February	Tell about your first love.	Draw you and the child hugging.	Love you!
March	Tell about your favorite letter.	Draw how you look when you get the child's letter.	Please write!
April	Tell about your favorite sport.	Draw yourself playing your favorite sport.	Run for fun!
May	Tell about your first pet.	Draw a picture of your first pet.	Take care!
June	Tell about your first plane ride.	Draw a hot-air balloon.	Up and away!
July	Tell about an exciting moment.	Draw the child winning an award.	You're my star!
August	Tell about your hottest day.	Draw you and the child on the beach.	Keep cool!
September	Tell about your school days.	Draw your first school.	Good luck!
October	Tell about your childhood Halloweens.	Draw a jack-o'-lantern.	Trick or treat!
November	Tell about the first time you met the child.	Draw a Thanksgiving scene.	I give thanks for you!
December	Tell about missing someone.	Draw a wrapped gift.	Happy Holidays!

[Greeting Cards]

THE RELATIONSHIP IS IN THE MAIL (II)

The messages below are taken from a series of "non-occasion" greeting cards recently introduced by Hallmark. According to the company, these cards are designed "to meet a wide variety of personal communication needs." There are 650 cards in the series.

It isn't easy for me
to bring this up,
but I think we need to talk
about our past relationships.
It used to be
that the past wasn't
very important.
But in today's world,
it really matters.
I care about what happens
to both of us.
I want us both to be around
for a long time.
So let's talk . . .
before we go any further.

◆

We've been together a long time . . .
a time that's been beautiful for me
because of all the warmth,
love, and happiness we share.
I know that "commitment"
is a scary thing, especially today,
when relationships aren't sure things
like they used to be,
and when it takes
so much time and effort
to make them work.
But I don't think commitment
is a thing to be avoided forever,
just because it's a big step.
It really wouldn't be smart, or fair,
for me to drift along
in a relationship
that has no chance for a future . . .
because I deserve the chance
to experience the joys, the intimacy,
and even the work
of a real, committed relationship.

WE'RE SO SURE GEVALIA KAFFE WILL BECOME YOUR SWEDISH OBSESSION, THIS ELEGANT GIFT IS YOURS JUST FOR TRYING IT.

Over a century ago, in the port of Gävle, Sweden, Victor Theodor Engwall was seized by an obsession to produce a perfect cup of coffee.

Today, we invite you to share his obsession, starting with a gift: the European-style automatic drip coffeemaker. It's an ideal way to enjoy the full, rich flavor of Gevalia® Kaffe quickly, simply and at its finest.



Victor Th. Engwall

Victor Theodor Engwall would have wanted nothing less. For he spent years tirelessly roasting and blending and tasting and testing the finest beans from the world's great coffee plantations. Kenyan AA, Costa Rican, Colombian, Guatemalan—up to six varieties of premium Arabica beans.

His efforts were rewarded when Gevalia was appointed coffee purveyor to the Swedish Royal court, an honor we have proudly held for generations.



MAKE GEVALIA YOUR OBSESSION.

Gevalia Kaffe is not sold in stores in the U.S. But now you can enjoy it in your home or office via the Gevalia Kaffe Import Service.

You may order Gevalia whole bean or ground. And if you prefer decaffeinated, prepare for a pleasant surprise.

Gevalia naturally decaffeinated coffee is made using a patented process, with the same ingredients found in sparkling water. So caffeine is removed naturally while the magnificent flavor of Gevalia remains intact.

For freshness, each batch of Gevalia is vacuum-sealed in half-pound pouches of golden foil, within seconds of roasting. Whether you order Traditional or Decaffeinated, you'll always enjoy Gevalia Kaffe at its peak of flavor.

YOUR GIFT: THE EUROPEAN-STYLE COFFEEMAKER.

RETAIL VALUE $39.95

With your Trial Shipment of Gevalia Kaffe you will receive the high-quality automatic drip coffeemaker shown. It's our way of ensuring that you enjoy Gevalia at its best.

The coffeemaker makes up to four cups at a time, and has a European-style filter cone to ensure full flavor even when making a single cup.

The retail value of this coffeemaker is $39.95. But it is yours as our gift with your Trial Shipment (one pound) of Gevalia Kaffe, with the understanding that if after trying it you want more, you will get further shipments through our Import Service. That's how sure we are that one taste will make Gevalia your Swedish obsession.



To order, simply complete and return the coupon or, for credit card orders, call toll-free: **1-800-678-2687.**

Complete and mail this coupon to:

GEVALIA KAFFE IMPORT SERVICE, P.O. BOX 11424, DES MOINES, IA 50336

☐ **YES,** I would like to try one pound of Gevalia Kaffe for $10.00, including shipping and handling, and receive with it the European-style Automatic Drip Coffeemaker (retail value $39.95) as a free gift. Send me Gevalia Kaffe—two ½ pound packages of the type(s) I indicated below, with the understanding that if after trying it I want more, I will get further shipments through the Gevalia Kaffe Import Service.

Check One: A ☐ Traditional Roast Regular
B ☐ Traditional Roast Decaffeinated
C ☐ ½ lb. Traditional Roast Regular, ½ lb. Decaf.

Check One: 1 ☐ Whole Bean
2 ☐ Ground

How many coffee drinkers are there in your household? **Check:** ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 or more

Charge my: ☐VISA ☐MASTERCARD ☐AMERICAN EXPRESS ☐DISCOVER CARD

Card Number:_____ Exp. Date_____

☐ **My check is enclosed, payable to Gevalia Kaffe for $10.00**

CODE: 153163

Please sign here_____

Name_____

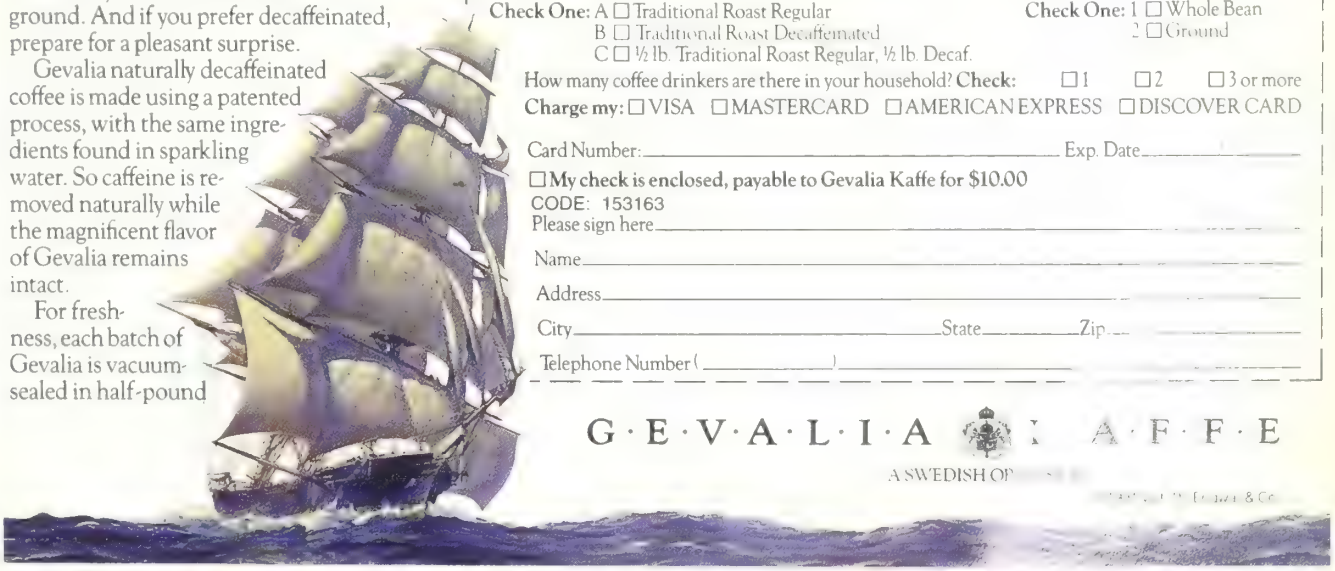
Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Telephone Number (_____)_____

G·E·V·A·L·I·A K·A·F·F·E

A SWEDISH OP[illegible]



HOW THIS SERVICE WORKS: 1. You must find Gevalia Kaffe pleasing to your taste or you may send a postcard within 10 days after you receive your introductory shipment telling us to cancel, and we will send you nothing further. The Automatic Drip Coffeemaker is yours to keep in any case. **2.** Otherwise about one month after you receive your introductory package you will receive your first standard shipment containing four packages, (1/2 lb. each) of the type(s) you have indicated. Your standard shipment of 4 packages will be sent to you thereafter once every 6 weeks. **3.** You will be billed only $4.25 for each package of regular Gevalia Kaffe and $4.75 for each package of Decaffeinated. A shipping and handling charge will be added. **4.** You agree to pay as soon as you receive each shipment. For those using credit cards, subsequent shipments will also be conveniently billed to your card. **5.** The above prices are guaranteed not to rise through July 31, 1991. **6.** You may change the quantities of Gevalia you want at any time, or cancel the arrangement and receive no further shipments simply by notifying us. **7.** Limit one membership per household. **8.** Offer is open only to residents of Continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii.



From "Tarot D' Cooperstown," a set of baseball tarot cards, by Jim Markovich and Paul Kuhrman, New York City artists. Each of the designs is based on a card in the Marseilles tarot deck. The Whiff is based on the Queen of Wands; The Suspension on The Hanged Man; and The On-Deck Batter on The Star. The cards are featured in Diamonds Are Forever, *a traveling baseball-art exhibit that will be at the SkyDome in Toronto until June 22. Kuhrman's altered baseball cards appeared in the October 1990 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

And that means I need—and deserve—
to know whether we're really
progressing toward a goal,
or just enjoying the present
for its own sake.
And so, I'm asking you
to take some time,
to think about what you really want,
and to be very, very honest
with yourself—
and with me.
Because I love you—and "us"—
so much,
I want to share a relationship
that's rich,
and beautiful as love can be.

◆

It breaks my heart
to see us hurting
each other like this.
It seems even when we're trying
to make things right,
we end up arguing.
So I think it would be best
for both of us
if we admit we're not meant
to be together right now.

And maybe, just maybe,
sometime in the future,
we'll meet
and then it will be right for us.
We'll have
all the good times, again.
But, for now,
saying good-bye
might be best for both of us.

◆

This is hard to say,
but I think you're
a much neater person
when you're not drinking.
You know I still like you
either way,
But I think it's important
that you know how I feel
because I really do care.

◆

We didn't live
"happily ever after" . . .
But we did live
happily for a while,
and I wouldn't trade that
for anything in the world.

[Market Research]

YOUR SOFTENER AND YOU

From a fabric-softener market study recently distributed in the Toronto office of Procter & Gamble, the manufacturer of Downy and Bounce fabric softeners, among other products.

A. Downy is well developed in the important Dedicated Softness Seekers segment; it is the usual brand of 44 percent of these consumers. Fleecy and Snuggle are also well developed in this segment. These consumers are driven by softness and scent; they are very involved in laundry, believing it brings family appreciation. They use premium-priced, premium-performance fabric softeners and believe liquids soften better than dryer-added softeners.

B. Relative to key competitors Fleecy and Snuggle, Downy is less developed in the Involved Scent Avoiders segment due to its fragrant, polarizing scent. However, consumers in this segment are involved with their laundry; they look for good softness and derive personal satisfaction from their laundry. Hence there is an opportunity for Downy to exploit this segment if a lighter scent is introduced with the same Downy heritage.

C. Bounce is well developed among various convenience-seekers segments. Some of these users (Dedicated Convenience Seekers) derive personal satisfaction from using fabric softeners but are less fanatical and less likely to receive positive reinforcement from other household members than Dedicated Softness Seekers. While they look for good performance, they have the strongest belief in the static-control superiority of dryer-added softeners and the weakest belief in liquid-softening superiority; they are motivated to do whatever is fastest and easiest. Other users (Uninvolved Economy and Convenience Seekers) are quite skeptical about fabric-softener benefits and personal satisfaction; however, they use Bounce because of static control and convenience. Finally, some consumers (Uninvolved Unscented Seekers) use Bounce only for static control available in an unscented (nonallergic) form. However, this group of consumers has the highest percentage of fabric-softener nonusers.

D. Generic fabric softeners and brand switchers are well developed in the Uninvolved Economy Seekers segment. These consumers are not involved in the laundry process; instead, they use fabric softeners for static control and scent at a very low price. Softening is relatively unimportant to them.

[Statistical Analysis]

THE GRATEFUL DEAD: A CONCORDANCE

From DeadBase IV: The Complete Guide to Grateful Dead Song Lists, *edited by John W. Scott and published by DeadBase, in Hanover, New Hampshire. The book, which is updated periodically, contains statistical analyses of the collected songs of the Grateful Dead, including a list of every word that has ever appeared in a Grateful Dead lyric. Below, the words used by the Dead are categorized by theme. The number next to each word indicates the total number of songs in which the word is used.*

Trains	
Boxcar	1
Caboose	1
Depot	1
Engine	2
Engineer	1
Engineers	1
Engines	2
Junction	1
Locomotive	2
Railroad	6
Rails	2
Throttle	1
Track	9
Tracks	2
Train	19
Trains	1

Emotions	
Afraid	8
Anger	1
Angry	1
Angry-O	1
Chills	1
Cried	4
Cries	4
Cry	15
Emotion	2
Fear	7
Fears	1
Frightening	1
Giggle	1
Happy	6
Hate	3
Hurt	3
Hurting	1
Hurts	4
Jealous	1
Joy	1
Laugh	6
Laughing	7
Laughter	2
Loneliness	2
Lonely	6
Mad	2
Misery	1
Nervous	1
Rage	4
Raging	1
Ravenous	1
Sad	3
Scare	1
Scared	1
Scary	1
Sorrow	2
Sorry	1
Sympathy	1
Tempting	1
Upset	1
Weep	2
Weeping	2

Liquor	
Bar	5
Barroom	2
Bars	2
Booze	1
Bottle	5
Bourbon	1
Burgundy	2
Cantina	1
Champagne	1
Colada	1
Drink	10
Drinking	6
Drinks	1
Drunk	2
Gin	3
Liquor	4
Piña	1
Pub	1
Rum-drinking	1
Rye	1
Saloon	1
Sherry	1
Stoned	1
Whiskey	8
Wine	16

[Open Letter]

MY PATIENT'S SUICIDE

From "Death and Dignity: A Case of Individualized Decision Making," by Dr. Timothy E. Quill, in the March 7 issue of The New England Journal of Medicine. *Quill is an internist at the Genesee Hospital in Rochester, New York.*

Diane was feeling tired and had a rash. Her hematocrit was 22, and her white-cell count was 4.3 with some metamyelocytes and unusual white cells. I called Diane and told her it might be serious. When she pressed for the possibilities, I reluctantly opened the door to leukemia. Hearing the word seemed to make it exist. "Oh, shit!" she said. "Don't tell me that." I thought, I wish I didn't have to.

Diane was raised in an alcoholic family and had felt alone for much of her life. She had vaginal cancer as a young woman, and had struggled with depression and her own alcoholism for most of her adult life. I had come to know, respect, and admire her over the previous eight years as she confronted and gradually overcame these problems. During the previous three and a half years, she had abstained from alcohol and had established much deeper connections with her husband, her college-age son, and several friends. Her business and artistic work was blossoming. She felt she was living fully for the first time.

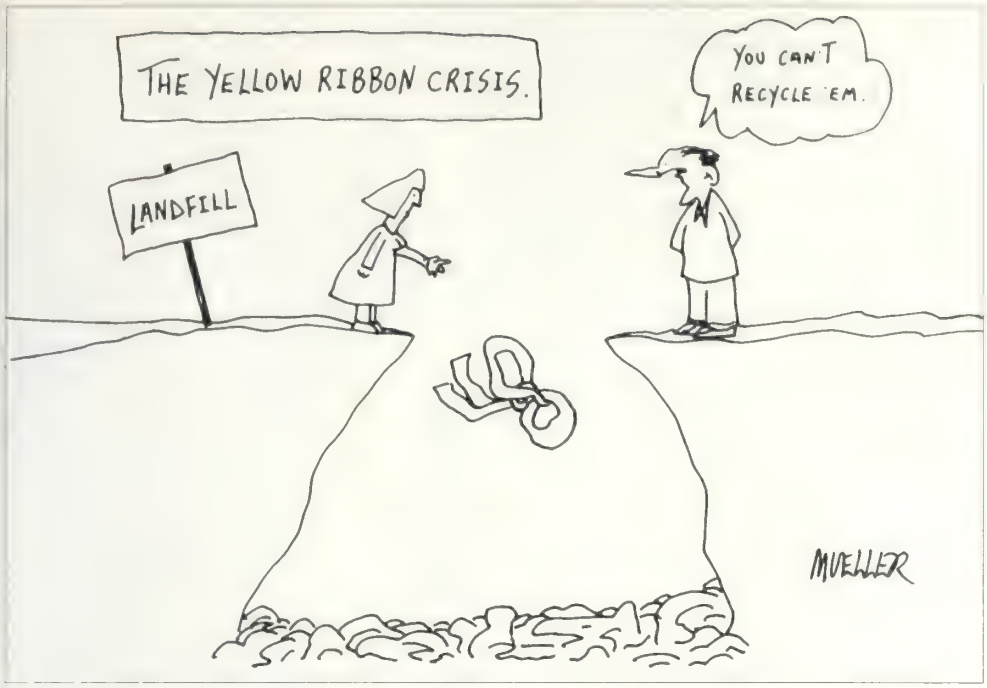
Unfortunately, a bone-marrow biopsy confirmed the worst: acute myelomonocytic leukemia. In the face of this tragedy, I looked for signs of hope. This is an area of medicine in which technological intervention has been successful, with long-term cures occurring 25 percent of the time. As I probed the costs of these cures, I learned about induction chemotherapy (three weeks in the hospital, probable infections, and hair loss; 75 percent of patients respond, 25 percent do not). Those who respond are then given consolidation chemotherapy (with similar side effects; another 25 percent die, thus a net of 50 percent survive). For those still alive to have a reasonable chance of long-term survival, they must undergo bone-marrow transplants (hospitalization for two months, a whole-body irradiation—with complete killing of the bone marrow—infectious complications; 50 percent of this group survive, or 25 percent of the original group). Though hematologists may argue over the exact percentage of people who will benefit from therapy, they don't argue about the outcome of not having any treatment—certain death in days, weeks, or months.

Believing that delay was dangerous, the hospital's oncologist broke the news to Diane and made plans to begin induction chemotherapy that afternoon. When I saw her soon after, she was enraged at his presumption that she would want treatment and devastated by the finality of the diagnosis. All she wanted to do was go home and be with her family. She had no further questions about treatment and, in fact, had decided that she wanted none. Together we lamented her tragedy. I felt the need to make sure that she and her husband understood that there was some risk in delaying, that the problem would not go away, and that we needed to keep considering the options over the next several days.

Two days later Diane, her husband, and her son came to see me. They had talked at length about the problem and the options. She remained very clear about her wish not to undergo chemotherapy and to live whatever time she had left outside of the hospital. Her family wished she would choose treatment but accepted her decision. She articulated very clearly that it was she who would be experiencing all the side effects of treatment and that one-in-four odds were not good enough for her to undergo so toxic a course of therapy. I had her repeat her understanding of the treatment, the odds, and the consequences of forgoing treatment. I clarified a few misunderstandings, but she had a remarkable grasp of the options and implications.

I have long been an advocate of the idea that an informed patient should have the right to choose or refuse treatment, and to die with as much control and dignity as possible. Yet there was something that disturbed me about Diane's decision to give up a 25 percent chance of long-term survival in favor of almost certain death. Diane and I met several times that week to discuss her situation, and I gradually came to understand the decision from her perspective. We arranged for home hospice care, and left the door open for her to change her mind.

Just as I was adjusting to her decision, she opened up another area that further complicated my feelings. It was extraordinarily important to Diane to maintain her dignity during the time remaining to her. When this was no longer possible, she clearly wanted to die. She had known of people lingering in what was called "relative comfort," and she wanted no part of it. We spoke at length about her wish. Though I felt it was perfectly legitimate, I also knew that it was outside of the realm of currently accepted medical practice and that it was more than I could offer or promise. I told Diane that infor-



From Isthmus, *a weekly newspaper published in Madison, Wisconsin.*

mation that might be helpful was available from the Hemlock Society.

A week later she phoned me with a request for barbiturates for sleep. Since I knew that this was an essential ingredient in a Hemlock Society suicide, I asked her to come to the office to talk things over. She was more than willing to protect me by participating in a superficial conversation about her insomnia, but it was important to me to know how she planned to use the drugs and to be sure that she was not in despair or overwhelmed in a way that might color her judgment. In our discussion, it was apparent that she was having trouble sleeping, but it was also evident that the security of having enough barbiturates available to commit suicide, if and when the time came, would give her the peace of mind she needed to live fully in the present. She was not despondent and, in fact, was making deep, personal connections with her family and close friends. I made sure that she knew how to use the barbiturates for sleep, and how to use them to commit suicide. We agreed to meet regularly, and she promised to meet with me before taking her life. I wrote the prescriptions with an uneasy feeling about the boundaries I was exploring—spiritual, legal, professional, and personal. Yet I also felt strongly that I was making it possible for her to get the most out of the time she had left.

The next several months were very intense and important for Diane. Her son did not return to college, and the two were able to say much that had not been said earlier. Her husband worked at home so that he and Diane could spend more time together. Unfortunately, bone weakness, fatigue, and fevers began to dominate Diane's life. Although the hospice workers, family members, and I tried our best to minimize her suffering and promote comfort, it was clear that the end was approaching. Diane's immediate future held what she feared the most: increasing discomfort, dependence, and hard choices between pain and sedation. She called her closest friends and asked them to visit her to say good-bye, telling them that she was leaving soon. As we had agreed, she let me know as well. When we met, it was clear that she knew what she was doing, that she was sad and frightened to be leaving but that she would be even more terrified to stay and suffer.

Two days later her husband called to say that Diane had died. She had said her final goodbyes to her husband and son that morning, and had asked them to leave her alone for an hour. After an hour, which must have seemed like an eternity, they found her on the couch, very still and covered by her favorite shawl. They called me for advice about how to proceed. When I arrived at their house we talked about what a remarkable person she had been. They seemed to have no doubts about the course she had chosen, or about their cooperation, although the unfairness of her illness and the finality of her

death were overwhelming to us all.

I called the medical examiner to inform him that a hospice patient had died. When asked about the cause of death, I said acute leukemia. He said that was fine and that we should call a funeral director. Although acute leukemia was the truth, it was not the whole story. But any mention of suicide would probably have brought an ambulance, efforts at resuscitation, and a police investigation. Diane would have become a "coroner's case," and the decision to perform an autopsy would have been made at the discretion of the medical examiner. The family or I could have been subjected to criminal prosecution; I could have been subjected to a professional review. Although I truly believe that the family and I gave her the best care possible, allowing her to define her limits and directions, I am not sure the law, society, or the medical profession would agree.

Diane taught me about the range of help I can provide people if I know them well and if I allow them to express what they really want. She taught me about taking charge and facing tragedy squarely when it strikes. She taught me about life, death, and honesty, and that I can take small risks for people I really know and care about.

[Essay]

THE TRUTH IN A PETRI DISH

From "Tissue Culture, or About the Last Cell," by Miroslav Holub, a Czech immunologist and poet, in The Dimension of the Present Moment and Other Essays, *published by Faber and Faber. The essay also appeared in the Summer 1990* NER/BLQ, *a special issue on science. Translated by Jarmila and Ian Milner and David Young.*

At a not-so-small celebration of some small research successes, an investigator engaged in the cultivation of tissues in glass exclaimed: *"In vitro veritas!"* The phrase has stuck in my mind. How much truth can one find "in glass"? After two billion years of unicellular existence, life set out on the road of cellular specialization, of the division of labor and functions among cells, and the unification of cells into larger and more self-regulating organisms. What can be revealed by having cells and cellular unions thrown back into a bowl filled with some ingenious, yet always somewhat deficient, proto-sea?

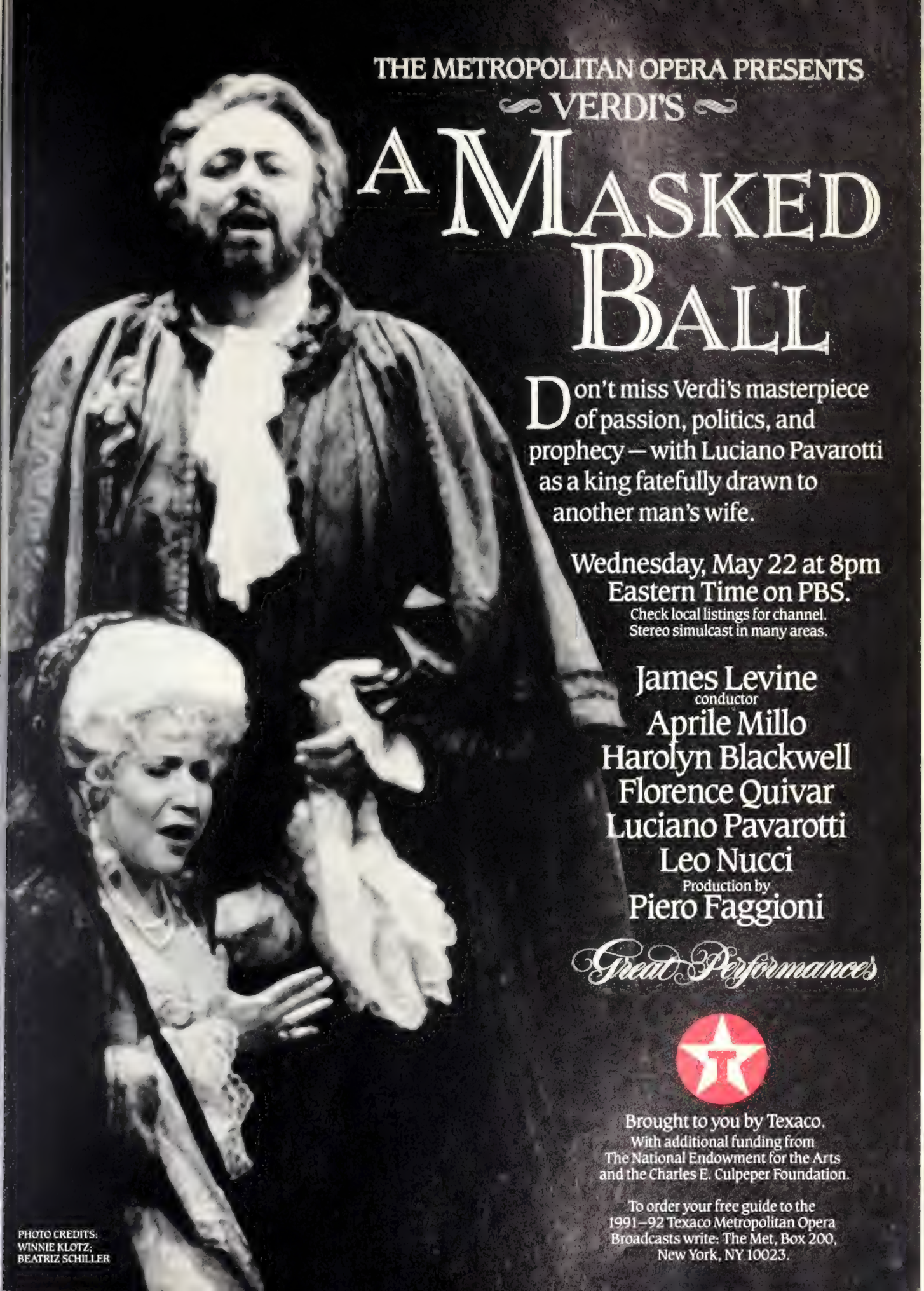
Normal, nonmalignant cells are reluctant to grow in cultures for any length of time. But in their allotted time in vitro they may reveal some of the truth about themselves. In a suitably formed culture, cells designed to ingest will continue for a time to ingest, cardiac-muscle cells will pulsate rhythmically for a while, cells capable of division will divide some more, and nerve cells will extend the refined and delicate projections along which impulses are carried. Cells designed to synthesize antibodies can be made to synthesize antibodies, especially after fusing with tumor cells. When this happens, virtually immortal cell lines are formed from a single cell, thus creating one of the most productive instruments of modern biology: monoclonal, absolutely pure antibodies. These cells, in refined large cultures, can produce interferon or promote the production of viruses for vaccines.

The cells of tissue cultures tell us much that is true about themselves. But they know as much about the music of the organism as a bunch of crocuses know about Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." Kept apart from the cells of connective tissues, which provide intricate networks at will, the cells in the glass suffer perhaps not only from lack of nourishment but from lack of information. They will try to achieve natural contacts, search for one another, issue signals, and combine into primitive tissues. But they will lack their primary meaning, which induced the origins of multicellular bodies. They'll be worse off than an ant without its anthill or a person all alone in a soundproof, darkened room.

Observing tissue cultures by microscope is immensely satisfying because it is one of the few means of direct insight into the modes of cellular life. At the same time it's rather sad and disturbing: You are witness to the ultimate extinction of units of life. Not quite enough oxygen, only a fraction too much acidity, an error in just one amino acid—and there's nothing but a vast, silent cemetery, an almost bare battlefield after a battle in which all sides lost.

And in this witnessing there is one very general truth, a basic truth with two faces, which can be seen in the glass, through the microscope.

Anyone who cultivates tissues knows that the first hours after planting the cells in the medium are the worst. The most primitive factors, such as the very nature of the water or the embryonic serum, can be the culture's undoing. Even in the case of the best water and the least toxic serum, the first hours see a great hecatomb among the cells, a vast selection of the individuals who will endure and those who won't (the majority). In tissue culture, cells are selected by a process that can be foreseen and controlled only with difficulty. The life of cell collectives in the culture is always subtotal, never total. The relative immortality we achieve in our cells involves


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only a narrow selection of cells, of whatever kind. Normal cells grow for only a limited time, set by the programmed number of possible cellular divisions. Only tumorous cells show a general growth—with appropriate care, an unlimited growth—as a living memorial to the long dead donor. (The most notorious cells of this kind are those of one Henrietta Laks, which have been growing in vitro since 1951.) But, finally, even the culture of the selected, fittest individuals—obedient to the basic law of life—perishes. That is one side of the above-mentioned truth.

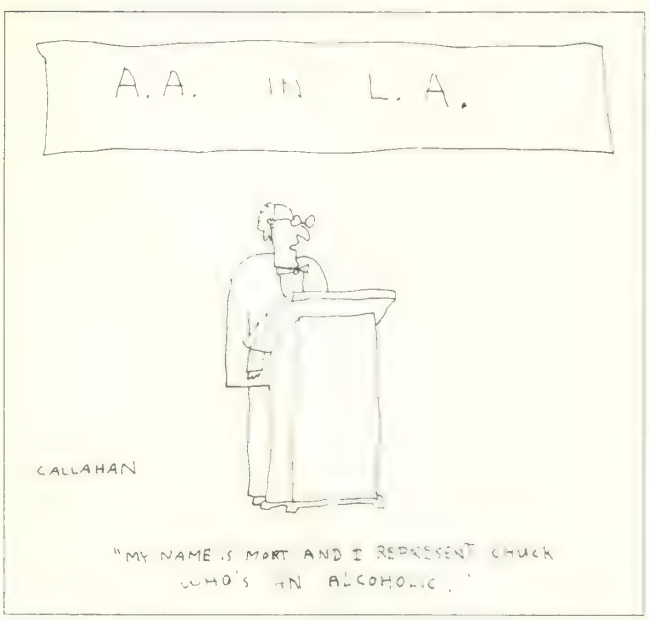
The other side is that even in what can be designated as a dead culture one can always find some isolated little cellular thing capable of life and self-preservation. After the most awful trials of freezing and thawing there is always, still smoldering somewhere, a little bit of cellular life. One cell in a thousand, one cell in a million, in ten million, but it's there, waiting for some kind of salvation. While life in cell culture is far from complete, death at any given moment is never 100 percent complete either.

A memorable exception to this rule was the experience of one researcher in a laboratory I visited some years ago. She repeatedly cultivated lymphocytes that within a day were uniformly dead. It was as if she had it in for them. The researcher never told anyone of her strange, deathly talent, and she soon departed for practical life. No one ever succeeded in repeating this experience. After any kind of mistake there always remains a fragment that is not worth preserving but that illustrates the other side of the truth: Collective death is almost always subtotal, not total. There's always some individual who gets out of hand—maybe it hides, maybe it's forgetful, maybe it's especially capable or especially incapable.

When we throw out waste tissue culture, we may be sure there's always something very small in there calling for help. It's no longer the voice of the tissue culture, the simplified vocal register of life, but rather the whisper of the last, lonely, useless—but nonetheless hopeful—hope. No longer really science, but still poetry. No longer what is law-carrying, but rather something beyond it, a statistically meaningless and negligible exception.

The incongruous whisper of the last living cell: If you have time, don't discard it; go to the microscope and look at the orphan cellular movement in the dish. Listen. You won't hear anything that's essential for the ear of biology, but after a while you'll recognize that it is a cosmic sound; that in spite of all the sadness of the single deserted and condemned cell, there is in its mere occurrence something optimistic for cells in general. Always, there is somebody who transgresses death. And even though it would take the Dead Water (which, according to Czech legend, joins together the remnants of dismembered corpses) and the Live Water (which gives new life to joined-together crows and crown princes) to make a tissue culture from the abandoned cell, or a mouse from the tissue culture, in the fact of the last cell the essence emerges—an essence that assisted the onset of cellular life billions of years ago.

The statistically insignificant exception is, in most experimental situations, unimportant for science. But it is important for man. It is that *in vitro veritas*, even though nobody hears it, usually—because, usually, there is no time to listen.



From the Miami Herald.

[Essay]

THE HIGHLIGHTER CRISIS

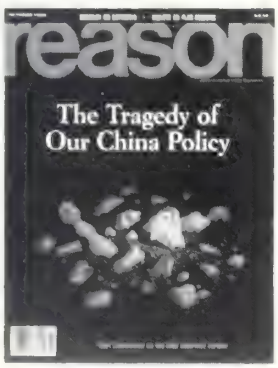
From "The Problem with Highlighters," by Lawrence A. Beyer, in the Summer 1990 issue of Academic Questions, *a quarterly journal published by Transaction Periodicals Consortium in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Beyer is a research scholar at Yale Law School.*

The use of highlighters—those marking pens that allow readers to emphasize passages in their books with transparent overlays of bright color—is significantly retarding the education of university students by distorting and cheapen-

Government agents befriended traders, visited their homes, and shared their meals. They attended their parties, played with their children, and won their trust. They deluded the defendants and then ensnared them in order to prosecute them for the moral equivalent of jaywalking.
—TRADER X, "SNARING THE CHICAGO 46"



Every five years in Peru we have elections. We elect a dictator every five years. You've confused it with democracy, and so have we.
—HERNANDO DE SOTO, "WHAT'S WRONG WITH LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIES"



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—*THE 1990 MEDIA GUIDE*

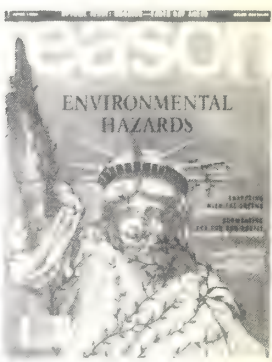


For all the right-wing grousing about Washington and the majesty of the government 'closest to the people' (yeah, like right inside their wallets), state and local governments in America are notoriously shady enterprises, demonstrating the twin evils of local monopoly and a cozy-with-the-powers press."
—THOMAS W. HAZLETT, "LOCAL HEROES"



"When the law determines vice and virtue, everyone competes to determine the law. We end up with a struggle between those who can't tolerate the idea that anyone anywhere is having fun and those who can't tolerate the idea that anyone anywhere disapproves of their fun."
—VIRGINIA I. POSTREL, "SIN AND DECADENCE"

Dr. Ehrlich was an entomologist by training, and some immediately recognized that after many years of rigorous study, he had lost the capacity to distinguish between an army of hideous little arthropods swarming over his desk in a Stanford laboratory and an upwardly mobile population of Homo sapiens building tract houses in Palo Alto."
—ANDREW FERGUSON, "APOCALYPSE WHENEVER"



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[illegible] read. Compared to the important issues of academic policy facing education today—government funding, affirmative action, teacher shortages, the role of "the canon" in the humanities—the impact of the humble highlighter might seem trifling. But highlighters, though they appear to be peripheral to educational concerns, are changing the university experience for students in ways that have seriously detrimental consequences.

While some students still read without using any marking implements, and some continue to swear by pens or pencils, most have switched to highlighters. The most common use of highlighters is for simply marking, with a colorful coating over the words, the gist of a text that the student needs to read. While this might seem harmless, such highlighter use in fact encourages passive reading habits in young adults who very much need to learn to read actively, critically, and analytically.

At best, most students who use the highlighter in this fashion are uncritically—almost unthinkingly—ingesting some of the authors' phraseology and gaining sketchy outlines of the texts. At worst, their "reading" consists merely of a skimming sensitivity to those conventional textual indicators that point out which passages are part of the skeletal gists of the texts ("In sum," "The main issue is," etc.). In accenting these passages, students are performing a typographical function that could be accomplished, with the same absence of understanding, by computers. As if seasoning food that will never be eaten, they are coloring pages in vague—but never fulfilled—anticipation of a more serious future review of the now-edited text.

It might be objected, with some validity, that a pencil or pen can be misused in the exact same way. It is nevertheless proper to hold the highlighter responsible for the deterioration in reading skills. When a pencil or pen is used for a highlighting (i.e., underlining) purpose, it is ordinarily used also for writing notes in the margins, a process that greatly enhances the reader's engagement with the text. The highlighter is virtually useless for this purpose.

So, while the highlighter seems to be an inexpensive, helpful minor item in the everyday world of the university student, its size and price tag do not begin to approximate its educational costs. Students, already expert at the simplistic regurgitation of ideas, now have an instrument for applying a pretty coating of color that makes texts even easier to ingest without thoughtful chewing. Reading becomes a mindless swallowing of words that pass through such students without making any lasting impression.

The freedom of inquiry and experimentation that we grant to our university students should not be impeded, but that does not mean universities must adopt laissez-faire attitudes about the nonacademic, but still educationally important, aspects of university life. There are, in fact, participants in the educational process who swim against the laissez-faire tide regarding the university's nonacademic responsibilities toward students: for example, those espousing religious, and particularly Christian fundamentalist, views. There are campuses where kissing, dancing, and drinking are prohibited. Unfortunately, these regulations extend beyond the mere protection of the learning process to an enforcement of certain particular ideas, attitudes, and ways of living. Yet the religious institutions are

[Meteorological Table]

VAN GOGH'S INCREASING CLOUDINESS

From "The Meteorological Odyssey of Vincent van Gogh," by Stanley David Gedzelman, in Volume 23, Number 1, of Leonardo, *the journal of the International Society for the Arts, Sciences, and Technology, published in Berkeley, California. Gedzelman, a professor of meteorology at City College in New York City, analyzed the cloud formations in 900 of van Gogh's paintings. The table below shows the relative frequency of various cloud types in works from each of the painter's periods. According to Gedzelman, the turning point in van Gogh's depictions of clouds came in 1888 in Arles, where the painter "deposed stratus and altostratus, crowning cumulus as the predominant cloud form." Gedzelman says that "van Gogh's cumulus remained innocuous until June 1889, when he discovered at Saint-Rémy how explosively tectonic clouds could be."*

	Period				
Cloud Form	*Dutch*	*Paris*	*Arles*	*St. Rémy*	*Auvers*
Altocumulus	6.6	6.9	2.7	13.7	0.0
Altostratus	10.2	13.8	5.4	5.4	0.0
Cirrocumulus	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cirrostratus	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cirrus	2.6	1.7	12.5	4.3	0.0
Cumulonimbus	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0
Cumulus	7.4	17.2	58.9	70.1	88.9
Nimbostratus	3.6	17.2	1.8	5.1	11.1
Stratocumulus	20.	6.9	5.4	5.1	0.0
Stratus	36.2	36.2	12.5	0.0	0.0

[Comparison Chart]

THE CALCULATED CANON

CONTENT	*The Winchester Reader* 1,024 pages	*The Norton Reader* Seventh Edition 1,242 pages	*The Dolphin Reader* Second Edition 1,002 pages	*The [illegible] Brown Reader* Fifth Edition 1,173 pages	*The Conscious Reader* Fourth Edition 1,146 pages
Number of Selections	124	206	105	165	193
Number of Selections by Women	54 (44%)	43 (21%)	37 (35%)	42 (25%)	53 (27%)
Number of Selections by Minority Writers	37 (30%)	15 (7%)	18 (17%)	15 (9%)	18 (9%)
Number of Selections by Non-western Writers	5 (4%)	1 (less than 1%)	2 (2%)	6 (4%)	4 (2%)
Number of Selections Written Since 1980	67 (54%)	48 (23%)	29 (28%)	45 (34%)	47 (24%)

From promotional material for The Winchester Reader, *published by Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press. The reader, which is designed for use in undergraduate composition classes, is described in the brochure as "the first of the next generation of large thematic readers, attuned to the needs of the nineties."*

on the right track in that they show concern for educational issues beyond the narrowly academic. The nature of the *entire* student experience—right down to the simple highlighter—must have an important place in the educational priorities of university administrators.

[Speech]

THE EXILE AS AFRICAN

Adapted from "The Long March From Hearth to Heart," by Breyten Breytenbach, the keynote address of "Home: A Place in the World," a conference held last October at the New School for Social Research in New York City. The speech was published in the Spring issue of Social Research, *the school's quarterly journal. Breytenbach is an Afrikaner living in exile in Paris; his most recent novel is* Memory of Snow and Dust, *published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.*

"For our purposes, it matters little what strange thoughts occur to people in Albania or Burkina Faso." This phrase from Francis Fukuyama's arrogant and fatally shortsighted article "The End of History" may for now seem to be apposite. Likewise Milan Kundera, in his *Unbearable Lightness of Being,* may have been right when he chose a war in Africa during the fourteenth century as an example of the most meaningless event in human history. In proposing that any event that happens only once is meaningless, he suggests a life that disappears once and for all, that does not return, is like a shadow, without weight, dead in advance, dead by procuration and procreation; and whether it was horrible, beautiful, or sublime, its horror, sublimity, and beauty mean nothing. He writes: "We need take no more note of it than of a war between two African kingdoms in the fourteenth century, a war that alters nothing in the destiny of the world, even if a hundred thousand blacks perished in excruciating torment." Indeed, one is tempted to ask: Why bother to look back to the fourteenth century? What about now?

On the continent with which I identify, whose cause—however weak—will always be mine, there are at present an estimated thirteen wars being fought: in Angola and Ethiopia and Liberia and Mali and Mauritania and Mozambique and Uganda and Rwanda and the western Sahara and Senegal and Somalia and the Sudan and Chad. (South Africa is not in a war situation; we just have ongoing large-scale slaughter.) Who cares?

For now the rich countries, or the developed world, or the North—call it what you wish—have evidently decided, unilaterally and disdainfully, that developments in the poor countries (by "developments" I mean stages of stagnation and deterioration) can have no bearing on the course of history. But this *realmoral* (the cynical underpinning of *realpolitik*) is ahistorical and brings with it a shrinking of public ethics in the rich world too. Recent events and events to come will show, I am sure, that it is



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[illegible] for the West or the North to close its eyes and close off its heart behind the pretentious bulwarks of a "new world order." It was the French philosopher Louis Althusser who said, "The future lasts a long time." History may no longer be deterministic or predictable, and it certainly does not progress, but it is never completed. It vomits at unexpected moments.

It is my exile from Africa that has brought home to me that I'm African. If I live in Europe most of the time, it is not as a participant but as an observer, and also as an underground activist for Africa. My pale skin and my Western garb make it possible for me to "pass for white." But my heart beats with the secret rhythm of that continent that seems to have sunk below the perceptual horizon of the North. At night I go out to scribble on the walls of the cold imperial cities: *Africa Lives!* In other words, I consciously try to shape my work, even the expressions of a private or peculiar idiom, so that it contributes to the awareness in Europe of Africa.

Exile is a difficult craft, but the exile hopes that it is also a useful one, that he may be a producer of awareness, even if marginally so. It is another contradiction that exile should be a pointed experience and yet, in a world of specialization, should promote lateral vision and parallel thinking. The exile has to think himself out of a hole.

In the beginning there is the hearth, the ancestral fire, and you are a native of the flames. You belong there and therefore it belongs to you. Then comes exile, the break, the destitution, the initiation, the maiming, which—I think—gives access to a deeper sight, provides a path into consciousness through the mimicry of thinking yourself part of your host environment. Now you can never again entirely relax the belly muscles. You learn, if you're lucky, the chameleon art of adaptation, and how to modulate your laughter. You learn to use your lips properly. Henceforth you are at home nowhere, and by that token everywhere. You learn to live with the flies, and how to slide from death into dream. You learn about creation—because you must compensate—and thus transformation and metamorphosis, although you also come to realize that creation may be only a reordering of existing images.

You husband your weaknesses: These are the souvenirs of your native land. You make sure that you are tougher than "they" are, or you damn well learn how to pretend to be. You never quite master the mysteries of financial transactions. When you are down and out, or when your clothes are not presentable, you keep out of sight. You demand to be treated respectfully; your edges become sharper and your paranoia more acute. In fact, your evaluation of dignity becomes a taut string. You are invited to New York for a conference? Insist upon being put up in the best hotel!

You end up speaking all languages with an accent, even the distant one of your youth, the one you kept for love and anger. You have acquired the knack of fitting in pretty well with any society—you do a good impersonation of the cosmopolitan—but in fact you probably never really penetrate beneath the surface concerns of those around you. You are engaged with an elsewhere that cannot be reached: Isn't that the defining characteristic of exile?

The exiled person is probably marked by a loss that he or she doesn't want to let go of, especially when occasioned by a political situation. But it goes without saying that one can replace, to all intents and purposes, the word "exile" with refugee, misfit, outcast, outsider, expatriate, squatter, foreigner, clandestine, heretic, stranger, renegade, drifter, displaced person, marginal one, the new poor, the economically weak, the dropout. The irony is that if we were to add up all these individuals we'd probably find ourselves constituting a new silent majority!

I dislike the manner in which the subject of exile has been romanticized, with the exiled ones pitied and slobbered over by voyeurs. I abhor feeding the stereotyped expectations of exile as a state of suffering and deprivation. Those who claim to be exiles themselves only too often reinforce the hackneyed perceptions. "Do feel sorry for us," they seem to say. "Blame us on history. Take on the responsibility for our survival." And for too many refugees this condition becomes an easy pretext for milking the sentiments of their hosts. They wallow in self-pity. All experience becomes frozen. On auspicious occasions they bring forth the relics and sing the cracked songs and end up arguing about what "back home" was really like. They are dead survivors waiting for postcards from the realm of the living. The clock has stopped once and for all, the cuckoo suffocated on some unintelligible Swiss sound, and they will continue forever in terms of an absence that, naturally, is now embalmed and imbued with rosy dreams. They lose the language but refuse to integrate the loss, and accordingly will think less, with fewer words and only morbid references from which to suspend their thoughts. They still assume it is possible to hold back the shifting dunes of time. In the meantime, the condition of exile becomes a privileged status from which to morally and emotionally blackmail the world with special pleading. It becomes an excuse for defeat. A meal ticket.

And yet—isn't it true as well that exile is a

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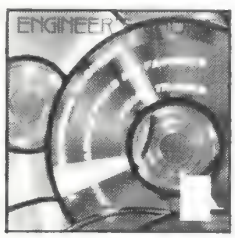
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chance, a break, an escape, a challenge? The [illegible] perseverance, the futile quest for survival by these stowaways, wetbacks, throwbacks, and other illegal humans, always astonish me: Tamils with false passports sneaking over the border, Angolans surfacing in Berlin from some "underground railway," Ghanaians passing themselves off as citizens from Zaire or the Ivory Coast, whole families crammed into one room, boat people working like beavers to build dams for a future generation. And nearly always they are starving themselves to help provide for more unfortunate relatives back home.

How resilient they are! See them come to terms with the writ of the rat. See how quickly they pick up the art of negotiating the labyrinths of Administration and Order, how rapidly they snick their tongues around the foreign language, how keen they are to learn! Along the beaches of Europe, on the squares of its cities, you come across the young men from Mali tirelessly unrolling their bundles of African knickknacks made in Hong Kong, the bangles and the beads and the imitation effigies. They peddle the instantly discardable. They squint at the gray skies and wind up plastic doves, which they throw in the air to flutter and fall. Somehow they survive. Have you noticed the pride and joy when these people manage to afford that first new dress or leather jacket?

History has produced many forgeries, but here—in the seams and folds of adaptation, where history is meandering along many obscure paths into deeper dimensions—the new nomadic man of the future is being forged. To be exiled is to weave in and out of history the way a Charlie Parker or a Sonny Rollins gives a solo edge to a body of sound.

Indeed, the experiences and products of exile could be a dissolvent of border consciousness. It could be a way of reconnoitering, shifting and extending the limits. Somebody will remember having seen on a wall the faded subversive message: *Africa Lives!* In your place of exile you would have introduced a dissonance, a feeling of the texture of awareness. Now, as you return to the past paradise, to your native land (let us imagine it to be South Africa), it may be with scars, but it will also be with precious gifts: the dip and veer of swallows at nightfall over the Niger River, the depth of the seeing without judging in an old man's eyes, the fly-embroidered smile of a child, the musky woman-smell of the loquat flower. Exile teaches you about individual fate with universal implications, because it is eternal and has always been with us. We are all dimly aware of our incompleteness, of the thick veils in which we are draped.

[Fiction]

TOMPKINS SQUARE

From Mao II, *a novel by Don DeLillo, to be published next month by Viking. DeLillo is the author of* The Names, White Noise, *and* Libra, *among other books.*

She came upon this park. It was something you come upon and then stop in your tracks. A tent city. Huts and shacks, she was thinking of the word; lean-tos; blue plastic sheeting covering the lean-tos and the networks of boxes and shipping containers that people lived in. A refugee camp or the rattiest edge of some dusty township. There was a band shell with bedding on the stage, a few bodies stirring, a lump of inert bedding suddenly wriggling upward and there's a man on his knees coughing up blood. She walked in a kind of straight-legged bobbing way as if to mock her own shy curiosity or conceal her awe. Stringy blood looping from his mouth. There were bodies shrouded on benches, bedding set out to dry on the fence of the children's pool. And the makeshift shelters draped in blue, the box huts, the charcoal stoves and shaving mirrors, smoke rising from fires set in oil drums. It was a world apart but powerfully here, a set of milling images with breath and flesh and a language everywhere that sounded like multilingual English, like English in grabs and swoops, broken up and cooked. People in stages of rag-wearing, some less badly equipped, belongings bundled in milk crates and shopping carts. She saw a man sitting in a collapsed armchair outside his shipping box and he resembled a sketch of an ordinary homeowner on a shady street before the picture is fully drawn. He talked to himself in an everyday voice, a man with some education, with a history of possessions and relations, this was clear to her. Talking intelligently to himself, making sense, and when he saw Karen standing there he shifted his remarks directly to her as if they'd been having this conversation all along. And from the spot where she stood now, a distance from the band shell, she could see more bodies stirring, hear the coughing, and she realized the whole deep stage was spread with bedding and there were people moving everywhere, a slowly spreading ripple and moan, or not moving, or lying completely still, half forms, beating hearts, faces and names.

She had to walk slowly to accommodate her awe. Tompkins Square. It might be ten-plus acres with pigeons walking everywhere but not a single one aloft and even when she tried to kick-scatter several birds they only scurried away at

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BY GUY WAID AND PIERRE PASTEUR

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Paying a hidden tax.

In reality, the American system of liability has become the source of a hidden tax on our economy—a tax that can account for as much as 50% of the price paid for a product.

What's worse, it has been estimated that this hidden tax amounts to $80 billion a year—a sum equal to the combined profits of the nation's 200 largest corporations.

Our economic competitors' legal systems do not encourage litigation to the extent we do. Consider, for example, that there are 30 times more lawsuits per capita in the U.S. than in Japan.

Is it any wonder that America is having a tough time competing in overseas markets?

Uncertainty stifles enterprise.

The unpredictability of our liability system is also enormously costly to American competitiveness. For example, in a recent survey of CEOs, the Conference Board found that worry about potential liability lawsuits caused 47% of firms surveyed to discontinue one or more product lines. What's more, 25% stopped certain product research and development, and 39% decided



against coming out with a new product. Meanwhile, our overseas competitors continue to research and develop new products at an ever-increasing pace.

Are we controlling risks or increasing them?

When we give a drunk driver the right to sue an automaker or highway engineer for a million dollars after a crash, are we controlling risk?

Or just encouraging risky and careless behavior?

If you are a manufacturer, you can be sued even if your product has state-of-the-art safety features. Even if your customer misused it against your instructions. Even if the risks of misuse were obvious.

When fear of lawsuits causes physicians to limit

ty system is essential if n overseas markets.

services to patients—or worse, to abandon their practice altogether—lack of adequate treatment means greater risks for everyone.

Is this controlling risk or increasing it?

It's an unhealthy and dangerous situation that needs correcting.

We must reform our "deep pockets" approach to liability.

Specifically, we need to change our approach and base liability suits on fault.

Our current system often encourages the frivolous suing of those with the ability to pay—in other words, those with "deep pockets." But does it make sense to hold such parties entirely liable, even if they were only minimally at fault?

A more rational approach.

Those who suffer economic losses because of another's negligence should be fairly reimbursed. No one could argue with this principle. There should also be just compensation for pain and suffering resulting from real and severe injuries.

But can we afford to continue a system that encourages litigation and financial judgments bearing little direct relationship to fault or to the actual cost of injuries suffered?

Clearly, a better approach is needed.

Congress has a role.

Legislation providing a uniform product liability standard would allow American companies to compete without the burdens of excessive liability risks. And this would unclog the courts and put American business in a stronger position as barriers to international trade and investment fall.

There is proposed legislation before Congress dealing with these issues. A solution to the liability crisis is vital to American competitiveness, and Congress can play a role in restoring the right balance.

So do the courts.

When all is said and done, our courts are the interpreters of our laws and our values. It's our values as a society that count, especially as reflected in the courts and individual jury decisions.

Together our legislative and judicial branches must recognize the damage being done to American competitiveness from the current liability system. And help America restore the proper balance.

Why is AIG running ads like this?

AIG (American International Group) is the largest underwriter of commercial and industrial insurance in America, and the leading U.S.-based international insurance organization.

Since we deal every day with issues affecting the future of the world economy, it's understandable that we champion reform designed to strengthen the competitive stance of American business in global markets.

Perhaps you'll want to keep the ball rolling by contacting your elected officials—judges and legislators—with your own views.

Or if you prefer, write Mr. M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, AIG, 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

AIG World leaders in insurance and financial services.

[illegible] flapping a fitful wing. People in clusters and larger groups, tending toward evening. Somebody cooked meat on a skewer and there was a fight not far away, a man and woman pushing an older man, backing him up, and he slapped at their hands and did a scat step, turning, and fell down hard. The whole thing absorbed into the background. Things fading all the time, hard to retain. A police minicab came by like some Bombay cartoon.

When night came down she was talking to a tall kid wearing a sweatshirt with Coke bottles pictured across the front, row after row. He was selling marijuana at the edge of the park, going, *Grass grass grass grass.* His voice got lower as he went through the chant, ending in a kitty-cat hiss. People walking by said Omar. He had a long face, sloped forehead, and shallow chin and his tightly webbed hair was so close to the scalp and so clearly defined and widely parted it had a maplike contrast and precision.

The fallen man was still down, trying to get something out of his back pocket. An old white came by wearing a rag coat and baseball cap and high sneakers and the two men fell into conversation.

Omar said, "But sometimes you get an EDP and the police come with stun guns and blinding lights."

"All the paraphernalia."

"They have a gun that shoots 50,000 volts. Be surprised how sometimes it only slows the guy down. Shoot him again, gets up again. It's your adrenaline."

"What's an EDP?"

"Motionally disturb person. People taking meth and cocaine is what could do it to you. It's your adrenaline and your temperature both. Call it getting high is the absolute truth."

On the band shell stage people were still getting up, going to sleep, they were sitting there staring, they were zippering sleeping bags and smoking cigarettes and there was a constant rolling drone, statements and set responses that made Karen think of formal prayers, a protocol of half words, dream cries, bursts, and murmurs. One voice answered by another, the gasping stab for breath followed by the curse. Fragments of an American flag were fixed to the blue plastic of a sagging lean-to. A man and woman sat under a beach umbrella. A woman peeled an orange.

She heard Omar going, *Dime bag dime bag dime bag.*

Someone crawled out of a box and got up shaky and walked after her, begging, roughtailing, a mean slur in his voice, and she felt for the first time since coming here that they could *see* her, that she wasn't concealed by the desperation of the place. This wasn't a public park but some life-and-death terrain where everything is measured for its worth. She realized they *saw* her. This was a shock. She gave the man a dollar, which he stopped and studied, which he looked at resentfully, talking to himself in the shadows.

She heard a voice beyond the fence, a woman saying clearly, "What a lovely spring night," and it startled Karen, the speaker's animation and delight, the distance traveled in a scatter of simple words.

She wondered what if the man hadn't stopped coming after her when she gave him the dollar. She wondered what if there was no special sum that might have kept him away.

Omar told her, "Once you live in the street, there's nothing but the street. Know what I'm saying. These people have one thing they can talk about and that's the little shithole they live in. The littler the shithole, the more it takes up your life. Know what I'm saying. You live in a fuckin' ass mansion you got to think about it two times a month for like ten seconds total. Live in a shithole, it takes up your day. They cut the shithole in half, you got to go twice as hard to keep it so it's livable. I'm telling you something I observe."

She imagined the encrumpled bodies in the lean-tos and tents, sort of formless as to male or female, asleep in sodden clothes on a strip of cardboard or some dragged-in mattress stained with the waste of the ages.

She talked to a woman who lived in a plastic bag. This person knew some things about bundling and tying. Survival means you learn how to narrow the space you take up for fear of arousing antagonistic interest and it also means you hide what you own inside something else so that you may seem to possess one chief thing when it is really many things bundled and tied and placed inside each other, a secret universe of things, unwhisperable, plastic bags inside plastic bags, and the woman is somewhere in there too, bagged with her possessions. Karen talked to her about what she ate, did she have a hot meal ever, was there something she needed that I can get for you. Practical talk. The woman looked out at her, dark-eyed and sooty, barely ever responding, showing the soot that deepens into the face and becomes the texture of the person.

She looked around for Omar but he was gone.

All the odd belongings bundled in a corner, wrapped and tied, many things concealed as one, things inside other things, some infinite collapsible system of getting through a life. She walked through the park, east to west, hearing the rustle and mutter of dreaming souls. ■

WHERE HAVE ALL THE ANIMALS GONE?

The lamentable extinction of zoos

By Charles Siebert

I tried to visit my neighborhood zoo one afternoon last year but found it closed for renovations. According to a sign on the chain-link fence where the front gate used to be, Brooklyn's Prospect Park Zoo, first opened in 1935, is being converted into a "cageless natural habitat." This was a claim I at first thought a bit redundant and then preposterously bold, considering that most of the world's remaining natural habitats are, in fact, caged or fenced to keep us out and the animals in. Clearly, whatever was being planned here in Brooklyn was to be as unnatural as the previous arrangement of cages and pens; it would just be rendered more naturalistically, the animals more subtly contained—better, perhaps, for the animals and certainly for us, for our consciences. But for some reason, as I turned and headed back along Flatbush Avenue toward home, I was thinking only of the old black rhino, wondering whether he'd be back.

He used to be, if you turned left upon entering and walked up a brief hill, your very first encounter—standing there on his small, enclosed, grassless patch of park the way rhinos everywhere and for millennia have stood: two eyes wearily looking for some way out of that dirt-caked armor, the horned head heavily drifting an inch above the earth. Judging from my numerous visits (I live a few blocks away, on the other side of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, along Eastern Parkway), he was never a very big draw, being, I suppose, entirely too unanimated, too much of what he was to look at for long. And yet I found him the most attractive, the most challenging to draw near to for that—a stillness to be outmatched by, a breathing part of prehistory, sensate stone.

I really think he knew me, might even remember me still: the figure on the periphery always making noises, waving, trying to take the measure of his ken—whether he heard the cars unraveling air from the trees along Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard; whether sudden police sirens

Charles Siebert's essay "The Rehumanization of the Heart" appeared in the February 1990 issue of Harper's Magazine. *He is at work on a book about the natural world to be published by Poseidon.*

I AM NOT SURE WHY THE ZOO'S ANIMALS MUST BE PLACED FAR AWAY FROM OUR VIEW IN DEEP, SUBURBAN DIORAMAS BECAUSE THEIR FREE-ROAMING COUNTERPARTS ARE DISAPPEARING ALTOGETHER

startled him or, like the distant, caged roars of the lions in the cat house on the other side of the zoo, he'd just come to take them for granted. I'd stand at the railing no more than ten or fifteen feet away and wonder if he could hear the sparrow's and the grackle's chirps and the differences between those and the songs of African birds like his symbiotic sidekick, the oxpecker, who'd hitch rides on top of him in exchange for plucking insects from his bristle-plated back. I'd imagine him holding to that same patch of earth years before I was ever brought to the zoo as a child in the late Fifties, when this section of Brooklyn was one of high civilization's epicenters: a thriving zoo at the tip of a pastoral park that, in turn, was bordered not only by Grand Army Plaza and the Brooklyn Public Library, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Botanic Garden but by Ebbets Field as well, the former home of the Dodgers. And it was possible that on a given, still, summer afternoon, with a lull in the traffic and the zoogoers' chatter, this same rhino had the roar of a baseball crowd for a Duke Snider home run in his small, fur-tipped ears. I've even, I'll admit, thought about him standing out there alone long after closing hours, growing sleepy in the urban darkness, blinking slowly the domino-lighted buildings through the trees into sleep and whatever it is a displaced rhinoceros dreams.

His name, it turns out, is Rudy. The park administrator I phoned said that the new Brooklyn zoo will be primarily for children—interactive exhibits, walk-through prairies and aviaries, and smaller animals, more easily kept. As for the old animals, the big ones won't be back. They've been "placed" in more spacious, suburban, "safari-like" facilities. Rudy, I was told, is now living happily somewhere in Michigan.

It is quite possible that Rudy was pleased to leave a zoo that *Parade Magazine* had voted one of the ten worst in the country. In truth, the place had become a bit run down in a squalid, inner-city sort of way: a mere nine cement-laden acres of sooted Beaux Arts animal houses, heavily barred pens, and the inevitable enjambment of species within. Just inside the entrance, the polar bears' rocky, moated enclave gave way in a quick stroll to the brown bears', to the Asiatics', and then to the grizzlies'. Farther on were the ape and cat houses, barely distinguishable on the outside from the souvenir shop and snack bar—all set in a tight semicircle about a small acrid-smelling seal pool. Beyond these, already moving back around toward the front entrance again, were some zebras and llamas; a few gigantic replicas of Victorian-parlor bird cages; and, in a grouping more circus-minded than zoological, the iron-railinged roundlet of nature's thick-skinned, rotund oddities: the elephant on its plot, the hippos on theirs, and then Rudy.

With the big land-based animals disappearing now from all their homes on earth, it may seem selfish, small of me, to begrudge Rudy and the others their reprieve from an old zoo in Brooklyn. Yet I am not at all sure what one has to do with the other—why the zoo down the block gets dismantled because the animals' home in the wild has been; why Rudy and the others must be placed far from our view in a deep, suburban diorama because their free-roaming counterparts are disappearing altogether. Maybe Rudy disliked being displaced again. And how much difference will a bigger lawn in a colder clime make to him, to his happiness? Why not a few modifications of his old Brooklyn plot, a renovation that would have kept him, if not demonstrably happy or seemingly natural, at least close—close to people, close to me?

Rudy and the others are gone now, and with them a way of looking, literally and figuratively, at animals. They've passed so quickly from being curiosities to being scattered sympathies; from being the captive representatives in crude cages of an extant, flourishing wilderness to being the living memories of themselves in our artful re-creations of a vastly diminished one. If we once could keep them just down the block, it was, in part, because looking at them allowed us to travel in place a world away.

But now we've discovered and displaced so much of that world that we feel only guilt about detaining them any longer in such a harsh rendition of ours.

The animals aren't any happier in the new natural habitats. These are places we've designed to make *ourselves* happier about our continued keeping of them. We are, in a sense, trying to eliminate zoos even as we go on designing and maintaining them. With our new habitats, we are trying to conceal from ourselves the zoo as living evidence of our natural antagonism toward nature; the zoo as manifestation of the fact that our slow, fitful progress toward understanding the animals has always been coterminus with conquering and containing them.

If the old zoos brought the animals here and asked us to imagine them *there*, the new natural habitats bring them here and leave us no choice but to imagine them here where we've always wanted them—in the suburbs of our attentions, safe at last from us and our cities. With all of them standing far from us, in their new habitats, we are no longer confronted with ourselves. We no longer have to look up close at who *we* are. Rudy and the others all have been placed now, and if we can't look at them, we can still see them in what's left of the wild—a habitat, a theme park we view like dismissive gods with a passing wave from the monorail.

WITH ALL OF THE ANIMALS STANDING FAR FROM US, IN THEIR NEW NATURAL HABITATS, WE ARE NO LONGER CONFRONTED WITH OURSELVES

Whether it's a woeful lack of imagination or a delusive surfeit of it that allows a person meaningful exchanges with a kept and compromised creature, I'll admit that I've always enjoyed my visits to our cities' old public zoos. It was their harsh juxtapositions, I think, the very characteristics that make them so sad, so unconscionable to some, that made them so compelling to me: the way that Rudy's presence alone, so near a busy urban intersection, seemed to question the city's very makeup; or the fact that on a particularly slow writing day I could leave my apartment, take a short walk, and find some solace in a good long stare-down with a monkey.



I've had some memorable encounters in monkey houses. The two I remember best began typically enough with the vaguely comforting feeling I find I get when staring at animals too long, a feeling that they sense in me a kindred mental lethargy, a nearly equivalent blankness that invites them over, or at least out of themselves. Of course, it's also true that if you sit in a church and stare at a statue long enough, you'll swear it's motioning to you. But I didn't imagine the compelling exchange I had a few years ago with a chimp at the old Central Park Zoo. I'd been visiting with him for some time one afternoon, watching him watch disinterestedly from his corner shelf the steady stream of passersby. Then, with the first lull, he and I staring at each other, he climbed down, came forward to the bars, reached through to pick up a bag of peanuts someone had tried to toss in, and held it out to me. Looking to make sure we were still alone, I reached for it. He pulled it back. We repeated this routine a few more times, and then, seemingly disappointed with me, he dropped the bag and returned to his perch.

Only a month later, while staying with a friend in Oregon, I visited the old Portland city zoo and, the interlude with the Central Park chimp still fresh in my mind, made a point of spending some time with his West Coast counterpart. He too was hugging to one corner of his cage when I arrived. People would pause before him a moment and then pass along to the baboons next door while I stayed staring until we were alone, absolutely no one else in the ape house. He climbed down, came to the front, and stared back. At this point I no doubt believed myself to be on the verge of some out-of-body, cross-species, evolutionary experience. Suddenly he turned and went methodically to the back of his quarters, where

Photograph by Tom McHugh / Photo Researchers

PEOPLE VISIT ZOOS, I THINK, TO HAVE SOME TELLING TURN WITH THE WILD'S OTHERWORLDLINESS; TO LOOK, AT THE MOST BASIC LEVEL, AT WAYS WE DIDN'T END UP BEING

he bent over and seemed to kiss the back wall before returning to the front bars again, very close this time, so that with his head stuck out he had no trouble at all getting me square in the forehead with a mouthful of water.

People do not go to zoos to learn about the imminent disappearance of species or to see habitats better viewed on public-television nature shows. People visit zoos, I think, to have some telling turn with the wild's otherworldliness; to look, on the most basic level, at ways we didn't end up being—at all the shapes that a nonreflective will can take. We are, by definition, such fleeting observers of evolution's slow-moving work that visiting a zoo and staring at animals can somehow stay us awhile, reinvolve us in the matter of existence. What the old city zoo did was to arrange such visits on completely civil terms—which is to say, our terms alone and unabashedly. Little effort was made to re-create natural habitats. We were to conjure up images of each animal's home by virtue of its starkly arrested presence in ours. Species of disparate regions and climates would all be kept in "houses," set a short stroll apart and given the most generic addresses: the Ape House or the Lion House, strangely provocative places because they were at once repositories of our ignorant disregard of the animals and monuments to our complete awe of them.

Noble statues of the beasts held within a house stood on either side of its front entrance, as action scenes of them unfolded in high relief along the frieze. Once inside we were struck immediately by that odor and the anomaly of our own harshly lit, echoing voices. Then we proceeded to take in the exhibits. They, too, were labeled in the most generic manner—GORILLA, the Latin name below, and a dot on a silhouette of Africa where it hailed from. It was as though the zookeepers did not want to muddle our experience of "gorilla-ness" with details. And sitting there, behind the bars in a small, spare, yellow tiled room that had, perhaps, one chained log in it, was the gorilla, looking both larger than life and yet, because of that preposterously anthropocentric frame, greatly reduced by it, like some guy who just got a bad evolutionary break.



The old city zoo was designed, as a visit to an art museum is, to invite our immersion in the works and have us be edified by them in some way. Indeed, the prototypical public city zoos—like Paris's Jardin des Plantes, which opened in 1793; or the London and Berlin zoos, which opened in 1828 and 1844, respectively—were all situated (as was my zoo in Brooklyn, years later) in close proximity of those cities' art and natural-history museums. Zoology was still a relatively crude science at that time (Darwin's *Origin of Species* didn't appear until 1859). But insofar as scientific inquiry was then governed by Francis Bacon's principle of understanding the world through strict and detailed observation of the objects in it (the very approach Darwin acknowledges employing for his research), the city zoo was arranged to be another step along the path to enlightenment.

The fact that the objects in this particular museum are living creatures and that most people's curiosity about them has always been less than scientific is part of what makes old city zoos so "public" and, in their way, profound. By pitting us so closely, one-on-one with the animals, they confronted us with our own strange need to look at them in the first place, to sidle up to their apparent blankness and project upon it, however divergent our projections might be. At the turn of the century the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke (one of many prominent zoogoing poets, Pablo Neruda and Marianne Moore among them) would sit for hours in the Jardin des Plantes watching animals, observing, for example, every movement of the panther, so that in his poem "The Panther" he describes even the motion of the cat's nictitating membrane—the film

Photograph by Dan Budnik / Woodfin Camp

over its eye—as it sees an image through the bars (perhaps Rilke himself) that "fills/and glides through the quiet tension of the limbs/into the heart and ceases and is still."

In a sense, the old zoo's arrangement was an open invitation for us to find in animals analogies to our own lives, there being so little detail about theirs to interfere. And yet the crudeness of their confines was, paradoxically, a reflection of the great regard we had for them, as though the keeping was enough, just getting them into safe view. Somehow, those old cages seemed to shout at us: "Hey, that's a goddamn lion in there, can you believe it?" And it wasn't just the lion, but that the lion—or any wild animal—was the envoy of an extant, limitless wilderness, or at least our notion of that.

A DAY AT THE OLD CITY ZOO ALWAYS SEEMED TO END WITH US CONFRONTING SOME SLIGHTLY CONFINING TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

I made my last visit to the old Prospect Park Zoo nearly two years ago. I stopped by to see Rudy, spent most of my time in the lion house with the jaguar, and, on the way out, paused before the polar bears' old den—the scene of a bizarre incident in the spring of 1987. On a warm evening after closing hours three neighborhood kids snuck into the zoo; two of them went up over the curved spiked bars of the polar bears' home. According to the boy who managed to scramble back out in time, he and his friend were hot and wanted to swim in the bears' moat. By the time the police arrived, they found the bears pawing at the other boy's badly mauled body; not knowing whether there were other kids still somewhere in the lair and in danger, they killed the bears with repeated rounds of shotgun fire.

I remember the incident casting a strange spell over the neighborhood and people expressing confused emotions: sorrow for the boy who'd been killed, befuddlement over his and his friend's intentions, and, most vociferously, anger and remorse about the fate of the bears. It was never made clear what exactly those boys were thinking—there was talk of one of the boys making a dare—but it occurs to me now that when they climbed over those bars, they were, in a sense, stepping into the story of the bears, the idea and the aura of the old zoo animal. City kids in the summer will take the caps off hydrants, anything, to escape the heat, and if they sneak into a zoo for a swim, there are a number of less threatening moats—the seal pool, for one—in which to swim. They, however, sought out not the coldest pool but the pool of the *coldest animal,* the animal that *stands for* coldness: the ice bears in some children's book; or the ones who ride blocks of ice across soda-bottle labels and menthol cigarette packs; or those I've actually seen in southern city zoos in the summer, sitting on a giant block of rapidly melting ice that a zookeeper had dropped in there as a fleeting acknowledgment of the animal itself.

We weren't, in the old zoos, letting the animals be just animals yet—neither the ones with whom we were said to have once shared a peaceable kingdom, nor those whose fate, as the new habitat zoos keep reminding us, is now entirely in our hands. They were to us the curiously shaped and untamed aspects of ourselves. We thought of them, and still do—though zoological fact and the new habitats have tried to advance us beyond such notions—as the evolutionarily wayward remnants of those pieces that found their best, most "reasonable" alignment in humans, but that we like going to zoos to see in an attempt to discern ourselves in undiluted forms. At the zoo, they could only be either surprisingly like us at times or we, at times, surprisingly like them. (I will never forget the day some years ago when, walking in the old Guatemala City zoo, I happened upon, at the back of the ape house, the door to the city's local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous.)

Somehow, the strangely affecting dynamic of a day at the old city zoo was that while it began with us standing starkly, face to face, with an animal, it always seemed to end with us confronting some slightly confining truth about ourselves. It's a curious mixture of emotions we feel standing

ABOLISH ZOOS AND
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WHY HAVE SUCH PLACES AT ALL?

that close to a wild animal: yearning, pity, embarrassment—for it and ourselves. There's an initial sense of exhilaration that allows us to forget our momentary overpowering of the animal in order to represent its power again, and then an incipient sadness that grows out of that moment and fills us with some vague measure of existential gloom about our need to spy on animals, to displace them in order to help place ourselves; about our one privilege over them, which at a zoo seems a curse—of being the only animal capable of looking back at all the others and calling them names. It's the same sadness Rilke expresses at the beginning of the *Duino Elegies* when he posits that "the shrewd animals/notice that we're not very much at home/in this world we've expounded," the same sadness that I've always thought compelled the original designers of old public city zoos to put the seal pool at the heart of things. It was the place to which we could report with our respective sadnesses, reflections, or just plain "zoo fatigue" and lighten our spirits, seals somehow being—with those quick, seamless, body-long presses of themselves through water—captivity's antidote.

On an unnaturally warm February afternoon this past winter, I stood beside the newly renovated seal pool at the now habitat-oriented Bronx Zoo, reading the question WHY CHANGE A GOOD THING? written in bold type across the top of a sign that had been placed there. The explanation given below was that whereas the old pool on this same spot had brought delight to eighty-seven years' worth of past zoogoers, the present pool is modeled after an actual seal rookery found on the northern coast of California, thus securing the comfort and delight of the seals here as well as our own, or so the presumption goes.

It's now a whole other sadness that we bring to the seal pool of a new zoo like this one in the Bronx. Aside from the urgent reminders about the animals' imminent oblivion, and the scolding tone of signs like those I passed along the walkway inside one entrance declaring that our INDIFFERENCE must now be replaced by our ONGOING CARE, there is everywhere this conceit about the animals' newfound happiness—the seals', for example, or the happiness Rudy is said to be feeling at this moment somewhere in Michigan. No one would argue that the cages and houses of old city zoos shouldn't be improved, expanded, modernized. But why abolish zoos and create habitats? If it's the animals we are really worried about, why have such places at all? As I watched a young pup ease onto a rock and then awkwardly fin itself from shade to Bronx sunlight, it occurred to me that Rudy might well hate the suburbs (many do). Once he'd settled in Brooklyn, who's to say that he didn't grow to like the so-called family of man, the daily blurred and squawking outline of us at the edge of his nearsightedness.

In fact, much of the reason for bringing him and the others into our sorry sphere of things in the first place was so that we could get a look at them and speculate about these matters. Somehow, by the end of a day of peering into deep, landscaped "natural habitats"—looking for the animals we've brought from so far away only to place too far away to really see—I'd decided that it was far less depressing to proceed, as one did in an old zoo, from the assumption of the animals' sadness in captivity than to have to constantly infer the happiness we've supposedly afforded them in our new pretend versions of their rightful homes. The former premise, at least, seems less of a lie about what a zoo is.

I spent most of my day at the new Bronx Zoo in the stately area known as Astor Court—the center of the old zoo which, with its now empty bird and lion houses along one side of the long grass mall leading from the seal pool, had the eerie air of a once thriving animal city that's suddenly been abandoned. The monkey house was open and considerably updated. It housed little ones—tamarins and squirrel monkeys, capuchins and marmosets—all set within a series of lit, glass-framed squares of deftly simu-

lated habitat: soundless, odorless, like a wall of TVs tuned in to nature shows with the volume off. There were a couple of teenagers among the viewers who were behaving the way people often do in such places, mimicking the monkeys, reaching to get their attention, which in this instance meant tapping at the glass, something that suddenly seemed entirely out of place there, like museumgoers touching the paintings.

Out into daylight again, I walked across the mall to take a look at the lion house. On either side of the locked front entrance were the requisite sculpted, vigilant lions; a lazing lion couple stretched across the lintel; and a series of gnarled, roaring lion heads jutting out from the frieze. Along the entire back side of the building there's a narrow walkway bordered by a heavy stone balustrade where a garish middle-aged woman with teased silver hair was scolding a group of children who were waiting in pairs to use the rest rooms located down a flight of stone steps beneath the lion house. As I watched them, I was struck by what I realized must be one of my earliest childhood memories: my father leaving me to wait alone in bright sunlight by that balustrade as I watched him descending those stairs into a darkness of caged roars.

Nobody I saw bothered to see where the lions had gone. They'd approach the front door, mouth the first words on the sign there—THE LIONS ARE NOT HOME—and then walk off, not bothering with the stretched canvas sign that explained, in strolling increments, what had become of everything, ending with: "Gone natural . . . the big cats are now in wild habitats throughout the zoo . . . Lions in Wild Africa . . ." Wild Africa is a wide-open stretch of tree-dotted grassy plain with lions, gazelles, and peacocks. Imagine the newfound happiness of the lions, placed on a moated island of grass in sight of—but ever at a distance from—the gazelles, their natural prey.

I get the distinct feeling visiting such places that I am really being told to learn how not to go to zoos. It is true that the new habitats are a logical place to sound the environmental message, the alarm about the vanishing wildlife. But such places are also, like it or not, a manifestation of a human impulse: to have our civilized home and the wilderness in our backyard too. It's an impulse, moreover, that we've been acting upon ever since we began building *our* natural habitat: the city.

I GET THE DISTINCT FEELING VISITING THE NEW HABITAT ZOOS THAT I AM REALLY BEING TOLD TO LEARN HOW NOT TO GO TO ZOOS



At this very moment, on two thin poles in a sudden clearing of tangled Central American jungle in southern Belize, stands a small wooden sign. The words burned across it designate the surroundings: THE COCKSCOMB FOREST RESERVE—JAGUAR PRESERVE. I remember the first time I stood before it, thinking how absurd it looked and, in turn, made all of us look: kind of the nether side of advertising, the declaration of a halt to ourselves, a small promise, to a vast, moiling jungle, of our absence. I was there about five years ago with a zoologist named Alan Rabinowitz, who—after two years of tracking jaguars through the brush and Belizean officials through the halls of government up north—had just succeeded in getting put aside for the jaguars of that region the minimum acreage of jungle they'd need to continue living naturally, without us. In return, Belize—a small, poor country desperate to develop its limited resources—gets to keep the tourist revenues generated by Cockscomb's visitors, those of us in the developed parts of the world who can afford a trip to a "cageless natural habitat" in order to walk where there are few apparent traces of ourselves and get perhaps a last guilt-free glimpse of *them* on, more or less, their terms.

In our two weeks of hiking through the jungles of Cockscomb, Alan and I didn't see any jaguars, they being secretive, primarily nocturnal

Photograph by Joel Bennett / Allstock

FOR US, THE "WILD" HAS
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cats. We were, however, twice very close on the trail of one: fresh tracks, the sound of faintly breaking brush, an edgeless, exhilarating fear (a feeling heightened by the fact that jaguars, as Alan explained to me, will often double back as you're plodding through the brush and trail you for a while). I'd known this feeling before of having the whole proposition turned inside out on you—you now the nameless, the observed one alone on their terms. I felt it once with just the passing, hot and malodorous, of a wild boar through the Terai jungles of Nepal, and once in a dugout canoe that, having made one too many turns down ever narrowing Amazon tributaries, came to a complete stop in the most alive dead end I'd ever known and the quietest noise because it had nothing to do with me. I believe at that moment I kept invoking the day of the week to myself and city traffic sounds—the parts of a day I knew to be elapsing elsewhere but that kept collapsing there into that silence. And then came this long, achy sigh and slip of a giant boa from a limb into water and, it seemed, my boat going down with it.

In his years at Cockscomb, Alan lost one of his assistants to the highly toxic bite of a pit viper known as a fer-de-lance, and nearly lost his own life when he crashed his tracking plane into the forest (we climbed around one day on the still dangling, rotted wreckage). He also saw all eight of the jaguars he'd managed to radio-collar and study succumb to the various perils jaguars in the wild face: natural perils such as disease, parasites, and infections; and those, like hunting and destruction of habitat, that accompany what some would say is just as natural, man's encroachment. He told me, as we sat up talking one night on the screened, lantern-lit porch of his jungle hut, that he knew jaguars didn't have much longer, nor did any of the large animals needing large acreage.



Still, Alan considered his jaguar reserve a qualified success, and in a month he'd be off to the Golden Triangle of Southeast Asia to work with an endangered species of tiger there, and then on to Taiwan to study the rapidly vanishing clouded leopard. He was spending his life this way for what we both acknowledged was a purpose so special as to be insignificant to much of the world: trying to preserve that feeling, what he described that night as a "sweetness," at the heart of a primeval fear he first felt in Belize the day he was walking a wide path through the jungle and, cresting a hill, came upon his first jaguar. He knew from the way it was just waiting there for him, fully aware of his approach, that it had never seen a human being before. It stayed, staring for a while, and then walked off silently into the brush.

The rest of the night, Alan kept talking about the incredible difference between walking into a forest that's informed by the presence of a top predator causing fear in everything below it and into one that's not, and I sat there imagining that—the world we're entering now, the world of fearless forests.

I next met up with Alan—it was a year later, and he was on his way to Taiwan—at the Bronx Zoo. He visits there occasionally to check in at the office of his sponsor, Wildlife Conservation International. We had lunch and then strolled around, talking, and looking, though very perfunctorily, at the animals. It's disquieting being at a zoo, old or new, with someone like Alan. I kept wanting to apologize for the inhabitants. We stopped briefly to stare at Wild Africa, and there passed a moment where I was, in fact, drawn in by the scene, believing it. Then a pigeon flew by, and drew my eye to some local shrubbery, then to an oak tree where a squirrel was sitting and unglimpsed starlings squeaked. And it was at this near seamless juncture of the habitat's evoked nature and the big city's

Photograph by Flip Chalfant / The Image Bank

local patch of it that my mind's eye snagged and the question arose: What's the difference?

The only answer, I was coming to understand, was none. The fact is, for us the "wild" has only ever been an idea. If too near, the wild has been a feared and unwished-for encounter; if too remote, it has been romanticized, coveted. The only meeting place the civilized world has negotiated between the absence and presence of the wild is the zoo.

Alan and I didn't discuss any of this. He had always struck me as at once resigned to and uninterested in zoos, though he was quite eager to show me the recently completed tropical-rain-forest pavilion for which he was a consultant. Once inside, I couldn't help thinking of those temple menageries of Montezuma or Kublai Khan, and it occurred to me that civilization had come at least this far now to have actualized for the public that basic impulse to have our safe home and our wilderness too. Everywhere water seemed to be splashing under sun-spliced palm fronds where colorful birds flitted in and out, birds you could go days before seeing in an actual rain forest. Walking over a small wooden footbridge connecting lower level and mountain rain forest, we passed a big pane of glass with a black panther behind it.

Alan led me to the trunk of a massive cypress made of some synthetic material or other and had me touch it, and he laughed about how authentic it looked, right down to the lichen and moss painted over the surfaces. Outside, there were big maps marking the world's belt of rain forests and, on a waist-high pedestal, a digital counter clicking off the acreage of rain forest being destroyed even as we stood there—me watching and Alan saying something about how he once hoped exhibits like this would inspire people to go to places like the Cockscomb preserve in Belize, but how he now thinks people will just keep visiting zoos.

I suspect he was also reminding me, and himself, that the wilderness needs to be represented before it can be considered. A good part of Alan's work in Belize, in fact, was getting different groups of people there to regard their own immediate surroundings. The Indians who live in the area of the reserve generally regard the jaguar with the same mythic reverence that their Mayan ancestors did, but they also will not hesitate to kill one should it wander too close to their village. As for those who live in Belize's large urban centers, Alan assisted in a campaign to get them to visit a crazy little zoo that had recently been opened there in the jungle about an hour outside Belize City. The two of us visited it together one day. There's not much allure to a zoo in the middle of the jungle: It looked as though someone had just dropped nets and cages into the trees and labeled whatever got trapped inside. Lizards were running in and out. Free birds and monkeys were stealing food from the pens of the captive ones. It was all very confusing.

THE ONLY MEETING PLACE THAT THE CIVILIZED WORLD HAS NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THE ABSENCE AND PRESENCE OF THE WILD IS THE ZOO

With my local zoo closed now, I went to visit the one in Central Park the other day and found it open and fully renovated. From the brochure alone, I could see this would be a far different experience from the one I remembered. The map had none of the cartoonish aspects of the old zoo maps—giant smiling giraffe heads and those of growling lions sticking out from a clump of trees labeled something like Darkest Africa. I saw now instead a very clear, scientifically termed assortment of earthly climatic regions: a Tropic Zone, a Temperate Territory, a Polar Circle, and something called Edge of the Icepack (a really terrific penguin house), all set around, of course, the seal pool. Where I thought I remembered the lion and ape houses and my old chimp friend to be, there was now something called the Intelligence Garden, described in the brochure as an orientation and resting area. Alongside it was the Wildlife Conservation Center, with the words "The Skin Trade" over the door.

I went in. It was a large, nearly empty room with world maps all around

DO THE DISPLACED FISH IN OUR AQUARIUMS KNOW THAT SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT, OR DO THEY JUST CONTINUE? DO THEY DRIFT THERE IN SOME SMALLER BLISS, OR CAN THEY HEAR ALL OF US OUT HERE IN THE DIM CORRIDOR LIKE SOME FAINT GATHERING OF GODS BEHIND THE HORIZON?

marking the places where killing animals for their skins has endangered their existence. In a far corner was a high counter with a woman sitting behind it and on the floor near the back wall a big pile of various animal-skin purses, high heels, belts, wallets, hats, boots. I wasn't quite sure if the zoo's curators had gathered them for the purpose of this exhibit or if this was some kind of drop-off center where guilty New Yorkers brought their personal items and then arranged their penance with the woman at the counter.

From there, I worked my way through the climates from hot to cold. The Tropic Zone was much like the rain-forest pavilion I'd visited in the Bronx with Alan, although here the birds were far more venturesome, flying all around me, landing on the walkways and railings, and there were fish in pools and salamanders, frogs, and lizards—kind of a primordial playground, The Garden without the big beasts, one of those fearless forests I'd been imagining.

Outside, a light, intermittent spring rain had begun falling, so I passed quickly through the Temperate area and stopped off to see the polar bears, whom I was surprised to find there, all the large, wide-roaming land animals having been, like the ones at Prospect Park, moved elsewhere. These bears, though, do have what seems to be a delightful den: a small, rocky sun deck and then all icy blue sea, so deep you can walk a steep wooden staircase all around the glass-bordered pool and watch from above or below the unlikely grace of them moving, so big, through water, their thick coats swaying slowly the other way like the wraiths of bears.

One bear never left the corner where glass, ocean, and stone merged, and, the entire time I watched her, she kept repeating the same sequence of movements: a short paddle forward from the glass to the rocks and then a massive, full-bodied flourish of a faint backward like . . . well, overacting in a silent movie. Over and over she went as I stood there watching, half hypnotized in the rain, thinking about all of those animals out there in the wild listening to us; and of all those we've been bringing up here in zoos and are now trying to teach their instincts to before perhaps putting them back there again; and thinking how there might not be one left anywhere on earth who hasn't heard it—that tapping, a footfall, a voice, a passing car or plane; who hasn't yet waited in some clearing to allow our image into its heart.

Behind me, in their cold room, the penguins were walking, and I remembered an afternoon I spent some years ago in a zoo aquarium, passing down its dark halls of diced and lighted ocean days—from one to the next—wondering if even a displaced fish knows that something's different or, like a zoo seal, just continues; whether it just drifts there in a smaller bliss or can hear all of us out here in the dim corridor like some faint gathering of gods behind the horizon.

The aquarium's penguins, when I arrived at their time-controlled day, seemed happy enough with it: bright and spacious, a giant papier-mâché cliff for their rookery behind them and a broad strolling area beside a cold, swimmable sea framed by the exhibit glass before me. And then, suddenly, it all came apart. Their sea began to drain and, as the penguins hurried away from it to huddle against the back cliff, a door-shaped section of it shimmied and opened. They quickly came away from there—moving as one penguin now, with myriad shuffling feet and twitching heads—and, lost between a broken cliff and an emptied sea, they just stood and stared from the far side of their day toward that dark open door. A few minutes passed, and then one penguin—the smallest and youngest, it looked to me—decided to make a move. Working himself free of the others, he made his way slowly over to the door and, poking his head around while holding the rest of himself back—two wings like little elbows lifting slightly for balance—peeked into the darkness and took in a narrow hallway lined with mops, buckets, and brooms, and the tall shadow of the keeper receding, and a light clinking of his keys. ■

DEFINING THE NEW WORLD ORDER

In a speech on September 11, 1990, when President Bush explained to the public the reasons for the conflict with Iraq, he used for the first time a phrase he would repeat throughout the winter: "New World Order." Since then it seems to have attracted as many meanings as victory has fathers. The President's critics say the phrase is a cobbling of three nice, vague words intended to give a sense of international purpose to a war whose true motive was oil, say, or a diversion from domestic politics. They believe the phrase has a half-life comparable to Gerald Ford's "Whip Inflation Now" or Jimmy Carter's "New Foundation."

Others argue that, because the events of the past two years have so altered the constellation of national alliances and the structures of power, a New World Order holds actual promise—as a Pax Americana, or a United Nations with teeth, or born-again international law, or a nuclear nonproliferation police force. In order to plumb the term's depth of meaning, *Harper's Magazine* asked three writers of differing political outlook to answer the question implied by the President's phrase: What is the New World Order and, in terms of realpolitik, whose is it?

OWEN HARRIES *is editor of* The National Interest. *He has served as Australian ambassador to UNESCO and as foreign-policy adviser to the Australian prime minister. He recently edited a collection of essays entitled* America's Purpose: New Visions of U.S. Foreign Policy.

AN IMPOSSIBILITY

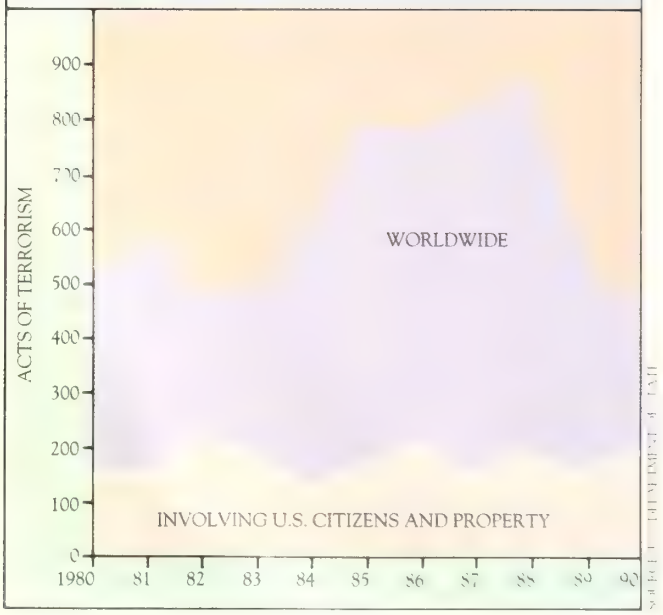
In 1933 Franklin Roosevelt launched his New Deal. In 1960 John Kennedy asked Americans to be pioneers on the New Frontier. Now another generation later, George Bush offers us a New World Order.

"New" is a potent word in American politics, promising not merely change but sweeping and transforming progress. It offers escape from the constraints and problems of the past, and a fresh start. After forty years in the realm of necessity occasioned by the Cold War, that is not an unattractive prospect.

But what exactly is to be the content of the proclaimed New World Order? To date, President Bush has been vague and unforthcoming on the subject. From the general proclamations, though, four different models emerge:

The Interdependence–Global Village Model. This view holds that the countries of the world are now so closely intermeshed, with such a density of transactions, that the old zero-sum games of power politics no longer apply. Conflict and competition will soon be replaced by harmony and complementarity. Instead of the separation that fostered ignorance and suspicion, there will be growing familiarity and understanding.

"...a new world order can emerge: a new era, freer from the threat of terror"
—President George Bush, September 11, 1990



The trouble with those who idealize the Global Village in this way is that they seem to have never lived in a real village. They are unaware of the envy, meanness, rivalry, and cruelty that the intimacy of village life can, and often does, accommodate. Or, to put it another way, the most interdependent social organization that men and women enter into is the family; and it is in families that most murders occur. Interdependence, in other words, is no guarantee of international harmony.

The Pax Democratica Model. In order to hold this view, one must make two assumptions: first, that a democratic revolution is sweeping the world; second, that democracies don't fight one another. Therefore, we are heading toward a much more benign and peaceful world in which sweetness and light shall prevail. Q.E.D.

The alleged spread of democracy is greatly exaggerated. It involves counting on the plus side many countries whose adherence to democracy is skin-deep, merely formal, and almost certainly fleeting. Thus Thailand, to take far from the most egregious example, is listed in the democracy column one week; but, after one of the military coups that are part of the ritual of Thai politics, it is off the next. In much of Latin America there has been little change in political cultures that, over generations, have sustained routine swings between genuine dictatorship and faux democracy.

As for the claim that democracies are not bellicose, it is worth recalling that one of the first inventions of modern democracy was the *levée en masse*, which mobilized the entire male population of revolutionary France and made it available to Napoleon for a two-decade assault on the rest of Europe. In 1914 Britain, France, and Germany were as liberal and democratic as many, if not most, of the countries now accepted as functioning democracies. They fought the most terrible war in history. And, of course, most democracies, including the United States, have often been tempted to fight "splendid little wars" against nondemocracies.

Both the Global Village and Pax Democratica models rest on the central faith that the New World Order will see a decline in the efficacy, and therefore the use, of force. That belief has now been seriously undermined by the Gulf War itself, in which military power was spectacularly decisive while the much heralded new economic superpowers—Germany and Japan—were feeble and irrelevant. As a result, two other versions of the New World Order, which

allow a role for force, have recently gained ground.

The Collective Security Model. On close examination, this model is a retread of a pre-1939 favorite. The prominence of the United Nations in the Gulf War and the fact that for once the Security Council functioned according to the manual immediately led to claims that the Cold War was at last over and that a system of collective security was achievable. In his address in February to the Economic Club of New York, the President put it plainly: "So, the New World Order, I think, foresees a revitalized peace-keeping function of the United Nations."

This claim ignores the extent to which the Gulf War was a special, probably unrepeatable, case. It provided a perfect villain, one who not only lacked any redeeming virtues but was, as it turned out, obligingly stupid. It involved clear and unambiguous aggression. The presence of oil gave it urgency. And Saudi Arabia provided a large, secure land base from which to conduct operations. Is there any other hot spot on Earth that offers such a helpful set of conditions for collective security? Surely not. And, of course, in a dispute in which a veto-possessing member of the Security Council is the transgressor, the UN will be as ineffectual as ever.

THE MOST INTERDEPENDENT SOCIAL ORGANIZATION WE ENTER INTO IS THE FAMILY, AND IT IS IN FAMILIES THAT MOST MURDERS OCCUR.

The Pax Americana Model. Can the United States, as the one authentic, all-round superpower, impose order on a recalcitrant world? In the afterglow of a glorious victory, this version of a New World Order does not lack support. Indeed, there is more than a hint of it in George Bush's depiction of the United States as the country that does "the hard work of freedom" and his claim that America's intervention in the Gulf was setting down new "ground rules" for the post–Cold War era.

The irony of the triumph in the Gulf, however, is that it establishes conclusively the impossibility of a Pax Americana. Far from writing any new ground rules, the scale of the American effort—half a million troops, a huge air force, six aircraft carriers, a lead time of six months, not to mention the subordination of all other policy issues, domestic and foreign—ensured that it was not replicable on a regular basis. The Gulf War cannot serve as a precedent.

The post–Cold War world will certainly be different in some important ways: Power will be distributed differently; ideological rivalry will be less prominent; nuclear and biological weapons, and the missiles to deliver them, will be more widely dispersed. If people could use the term "New World Order" in a neutral, nonprescriptive way—perhaps without the capital letters—it might be useful as a term to acknowledge that there have been changes in the world. But, alas, they can't. With President Bush taking the lead, the term simply serves to foster illusion and encourage the reemergence of the utopian strain in American thinking on world affairs. It is better avoided.

IAN BURUMA *is foreign editor for* The Spectator *in London. His most recent book is entitled* God's Dust: A Modern Asian Journey, *published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.*

A MORALITY

We have entered a New World Order, a marriage, if it works, of decency (democracy and human rights) and realpolitik. The Vietnam syndrome, so we are told by the President of the United States, is no more. The real issue in the matter of the New World Order, whether this is openly stated or not, is the legitimacy of U.S., or U.S.-led, intervention.

National Liberationists, isolationists, and enemies of "U.S. imperialism" have long argued that America should keep its hands off other nations under all circumstances. If there is any ordering to be done, it must be done by the United Nations. This position sounds fine in principle, but in practice the United Nations without the United States is toothless and cannot order much.

Champions of the so-called Third World have long assumed that American interests could not possibly coincide with those of poor, non-Western countries. Such champions, often journalists or academics with some expertise in these areas, like to emphasize the cultural ignorance and insensitivity with which Uncle Sam puts his muddy boots into faraway lands. Champion-experts tend, in these matters, to reflect the opinions of semi-Westernized Third World intellectuals, traumatized by the colonial past, who blame every misfortune on the United States. Pol Pot: Henry Kissinger's fault. Pinochet: a mere American puppet. Saddam Hussein: an American creation. The invasion of Kuwait: a CIA trick. And so on. There was some justification for this facile view when the

Cold War was still hot and "our bastards" were often just that, but the good times for anti-communist dictators now appear to be over. Even so, the champion-experts have hardly changed their tone.

During the Gulf War, experts on the "Arab mind" warned that U.S. ignorance would cause catastrophe: The entire Arab world would rise against the West. I have also heard the argument that fighting Saddam was just a way of imposing "Western values" on an alien world. But if the New World Order means anything, it is that basic rights and freedom from tyranny have little to do with culture. No one—not Arabs, Chinese, or Tibetans—is culturally programmed to enjoy being bullied. Cultural differences do not excuse tyrannical rulers. This might seem an obvious point, but such was and still often is exactly the reasoning of the many people, from right to left, who justified the actions of Chairman Mao, among other Third World dictators. There were many arguments to be made for or against using military force against Saddam, but whether or not President Bush understood Arab culture was irrelevant.

NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE RELEVANT. IT IS PERFECTLY TRUE THAT WITHOUT OIL, THE WORLD MIGHT HAVE LET SADDAM HUSSEIN BE. BUT SO WHAT?

National interests, of course, *are* relevant. It is perfectly true that without oil, the world might have let Saddam Hussein be. But so what? Did that make the case against him less just? The idea that the United States can be looking after its own interests and be doing good at the same time is particularly painful and confusing to Third Worlders and National Liberationists, for it means they have lost the moral high ground. Henry Kissinger's doctrinaire realpolitik could be condemned as being immoral or, if you prefer, amoral. But Bush's New World Order has a moral basis, badly articulated, perhaps, but moral nonetheless.

This is, of course, not to say that his policies will always be right or that the New World Order is without its problems. One of the most obvious problems was plain to see in the Gulf from the moment Saddam's men marched into Kuwait. What was the United States to do? Punishing Saddam for gobbling up a sovereign state was an aim on which it was relatively easy to reach agreement. The sovereignty of borders is a principle upon which orderly international relations are based. Once you let go of that principle, people will be invading all over the place. But another, less openly stated, aim was to break the power of Saddam in his own country, because he is a danger to others and a tyrant to his people. There was a clear interest in pursuing this goal, and it was morally decent to boot, but it did mean infringing on the sovereignty of Iraq. So what about the principle of respecting national borders? There was no good answer to this, so the President had to, as it were, beat around the bush.

This same problem came up during the war-crimes trials after World War II. The Nazi leaders were punished for what they did *during* the war, after many borders had been crossed, but not for what they did *before* the war began to their own people, principally the Jews. Even in the extreme case of Nazi crimes, such trials would have meant interfering with a sovereign nation—a nation ruled by thugs, perhaps, but still a sovereign nation.

It is worth pondering whether the New World Order allows us to reconsider the principle of sacrosanct sovereignty. In practice, we have been rethinking it all along. Few liberals protested against sanctions aimed at the South African government, even though apartheid was an internal South African affair. And President Bush has been criticized, and rightly so, for not protesting more forcefully against the killings in Beijing, let alone Lhasa. But protesting is one thing. Should the United States and its allies not go much further than that? If freedom from tyranny is indeed a universal human right, should we not actively intervene when tyranny becomes intolerable? Should Pol Pot have been stopped by force? Or Idi Amin? Or Ne Win?

The answer is yes, in principle but not inevitably in practice. Neither the United States nor any other country can or should act as a permanent fire brigade, putting out every fire in the world. Nor does every dictator merit a war. It would be too expensive, in human life and in revenue, and it would not necessarily do any good. It could, on the contrary, make things worse. Because the New World Order has a moral basis doesn't mean that it should be a moral crusade.

To expect to impose democracy on others by force is a vain and dangerous illusion. But democracy can be encouraged where there is a demand for it—in China, in Burma, or in any country where this demand is squelched by force. If we have finally abandoned the idea that such aspirations are misguided yearnings for Western values, or that the sovereignty of nations is always of greater worth than the liberation of people (not The People), then the New World Order will have proved its value already.

RICHARD BARNET *is a co-founder of the Institute for Policy Studies, in Washington, D.C., and the author of twelve books on foreign policy. His most recent book is entitled* The Rockets' Red Glare: War, Politics and the American Presidency, *published by Simon & Schuster.*

AN ILLUSION

When Operation Desert Storm ended in the triumphal hundred-hour ground war, George Bush's mysterious slogan "New World Order" suddenly took on meaning. The United States is now the only global military superpower, and the new political arrangements in the Middle East, whether formally negotiated or not, will be in large measure a Pax Americana. The United States will be more assertive in pressing for an Israeli-Arab settlement, and, with the realignment of forces in the region, some progress may well be made. Saudi Arabia is now firmly in the American camp. Syria has been accorded the status of an honorary former terrorist state and is using its new financial support from coalition partners to build up its military forces. Iran is biding its time. Cheap oil is here to stay until the next crisis, and the quick and efficient destruction of much of Iraq and Kuwait may well lift the United States out of recession.

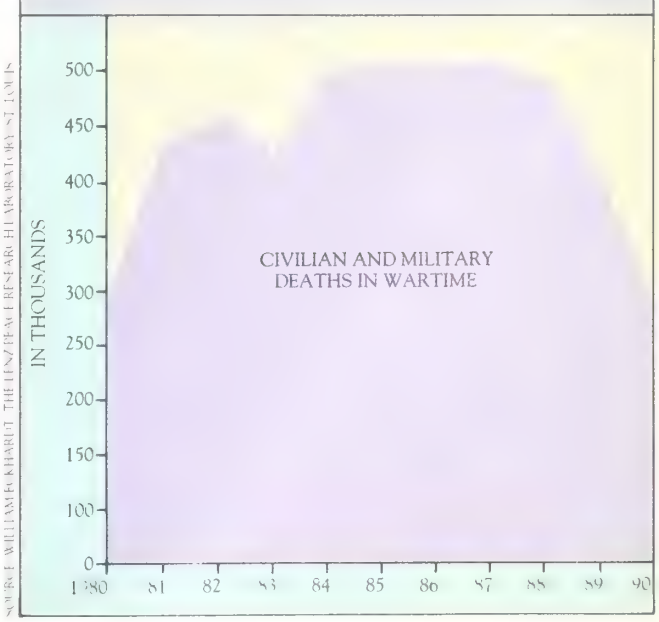
What sort of New World Order will be built on all this? The war in the Gulf has already changed the political culture of the United States. "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all," President Bush exulted at a White House appearance. The United States finally fought a big war against a plausible, if inflated, enemy; won decisively; and the public applauded. The Pentagon's reticence about fighting wars that risk estranging the military forces from the civil society has given way to justifiable pride in a war well fought, and to new confidence that the administration will stop the budget cuts and borrow enough money to finance the permanent preparation for an endless series of high-tech wars across the planet.

Last January the country was divided about the risks of the war and, to a lesser extent, the morality of resolving the crisis by killing tens of thousands of Iraqis who themselves are the victims of Saddam's crimes. The stunning victory has blown away all thought of risk, and, for all but a tiny minority, success has settled the moral questions, too. It will be easier now to convince the public that the escalating misery in the poor countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America is essentially a continuing military problem.

Does this mean that the United States is now embarked on a worldwide military crusade for the New World Order? Is our top export now to be high-tech war, our slogan "Have smart bombs, will travel"? In his remarks to the Economic Club of New York, before the ground war began, President Bush suggested that American leadership in fighting the Gulf War would result in "vastly restored credibility" for the United States that could be translated into more "harmonious" relations with its major industrial competitors. In other words, the leverage over the allies that the United States enjoyed during the Cold War but lost when the Soviet Union dropped out of the global conflict can now be restored by the United States' becoming the policeman in strategic areas of the Third World. This notion of America's role in the world is reflected in high-level Pentagon statements about the missions of the armed forces published several months before Iraq invaded Kuwait. General A. M. Gray, commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote, three months before the invasion of Kuwait, that the United States must maintain "a credible military power projection capability with the flexibility to respond to conflicts across the spectrum of violence throughout the globe."

This shift in the political culture will have an effect on the U.S. budget. The "peace dividend" lies buried in the desert. But will the war that worked bring about a fundamental change

"...an era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony"
—*President George Bush, September 11, 1990*



in the U.S. role in the world? I think not. It is hard to think of sites for future wars that feature all the essential conditions that made the Gulf War, despite the numbers of troops and the financial cost, the most splendid of little wars: Saddam's brutal aggression against a small, defenseless country without even a shred of a plausible legal claim; a villain out of central casting, with nuclear ambitions and a weakness for poison gas, who at both the negotiating table and on the battlefield revealed an unerring instinct for his own jugular; the absence of Soviet opposition; a treeless battlefield ideal for high-tech slaughter; shared oil anxieties stronger than the economic rivalries dividing the United States, Japan, and Europe; countries rich enough to pay the warriors not only to fight a "free" war but also to rebuild what they destroyed.

The politically sophisticated generals who crafted the Gulf operation, having restored the reputation of the armed forces, are in no hurry to risk it again. They understand that other political crises will not offer such promising terrain and that long, inconclusive, and disappointing wars are just as dangerous to the health of the United States' military now as they were before President Bush exorcised the demons of Vietnam.

Nor are Germany and Japan, the principal beneficiaries and reluctant financiers of the U.S. war effort, willing to support the United States in a crusade against evil regimes around the globe. Once the real economic costs, the disastrous environmental effects, and the long-term political fallout of the war are assessed, the United States' major industrial competitors are likely to be more restrained in supporting future crusades for world order orchestrated by this nation—even to the limited extent that they have cooperated in this one. The more the United States assumes the posture of the Lone Ranger and continues to treat the United Nations as a flag of convenience, the more guarded they will be.

"...we must act to control the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the missiles used to deliver them"
—President George Bush, March 6, 1991



For all the bravado in Washington about the dawn of the second American century, making war will not be the primary basis of national power in this new century. Having neglected its technological and industrial base, the United States is now extremely dependent on short-term foreign capital. If the United States, Europe, and Japan continue to move toward competitive trading blocs, such an economic world order cannot be policed by American military power.

The American role in the New World Order will ultimately be determined by economic constraints. The growing vulnerability of the U.S. economy, its dependence on foreign capital, its failure to invest in roads, bridges, schools, and civilian technology are now taking such a dramatic toll on civil society that unless the investment priorities are radically changed, American influence will inevitably decline. The Soviet Union, it should be remembered, disappeared as a global political actor at the very moment when it was at the pinnacle of its military power. Despite the promilitary sentiment sweeping the United States, it may not be politically possible for an American president to lead the American people into the next century as the new Sparta: The United States is the only advanced industrial nation without national health insurance. It is number one in the percentage of the population behind bars. And it has a murder rate unequaled anywhere in the world that keeps statistics. As the President himself noted in his victory speech to Congress, during the one hundred hours of the ground war more Americans were killed by gunfire on our city streets than in the Kuwait-Iraq theater of operations. The afterglow of victory is not enough to restore the sinews of nationhood, and as these weaken so does the real power of the United States to influence the New World Order. For the crucial battles of the new century, our industrial competitors concentrate on their economic bases, while the United States, seemingly unable to understand the shifting foundations of national power, risks being caught in a time warp of an American century that is long gone. ■

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AN IMAGE OF A

Food for everything b

Help yourself to a fine crystal flute of cold brut champagne and raise it to the imaginative men and women, the "food stylists," who spend as long as a week to create photographs like this—photographs of *interesting* meals, *creative* meals, meals that you too might prepare or might eat at just the right restaurant, meals that say something about you. You have seen so many of these pictures: in magazines devoted to food, in commercials and glossy advertisements, more often than not bathed in the kind of golden light (like here) that makes you feel warm, the way you feel when you share good food with good friends at those special times. So lift your glass of bubbly . . . but don't drink it. Don't *ruin* everything. The champagne shown here is actually ginger ale—soda holds its bubbles longer and *looks* so much more real. And to make the ginger ale look the way you most desire champagne to look—so fizzy you can feel the tickle on your tongue—the food stylist has tossed in a helping of salt.



Fresh ice cream, made with your very own ice-cream maker—that one you saw in the catalogue pictured with a dish of *rich, creamy* ice cream and, right then, knew you needed. Ice cream always looks so *tempting* when you see it in pictures. In ads for ice cream, the peach ice cream has so many bits of peach, the chocolate chip so many chocolate chips. This is because imaginative food stylists have the care and patience to pick every last chocolate chip out of a gallon of the chocolate chip ice cream they are tempting you with and put them all into those one or two scoops you see—thereby technically complying with truth-in-advertising laws that state that the food shown in an ad must be the food being advertised. If a photo is not for an ad, no such laws apply, so stylists can really *create:* The super-creamy "ice cream" here is actually Crisco vegetable shortening, whipped in a Cuisinart with red food coloring and a few red cherries, then molded to look just the way you like it.

These are, in fact, cherries. Really. They're "heroes," as the stylists say, perfect specimens. They are what previous pictures have taught you to look for in a cherry. In this case, two heroes could not be found with stems attached, which is how you want them to look when you want them to say "fresh." The stylist had to glue the best stems he could find to two cherries. The cherries were then coated with olive oil to add a healthy, natural sheen.

Photograph by Rick Mariani. Styling by Robert Skotnicki

ETITE APPEASED

g, by Tom Thompson



Look! Someone has poured the espresso. You didn't see the coffee being poured, because pouring is very hard for the stylist to get just right. Wine especially, when being poured, looks wrong, not as silky and magnificent as we expect—*demand*—wine to look. Stylists substitute a syrupy concoction made of glycerine and Welch's grape juice, which pours the way we think wine should pour. (The perfectionist can even go one step further: A New York company called Trengove makes acrylic carvings of wines in mid-pour.) Coffee's problem, pouring aside, is a tendency to develop an oily residue on its surface during the hours of styling and photographing. Needed was something that looks like coffee in a picture. What you have here is a cup of room-temperature molasses.

Our main dish, the game hen—Mediterranean, in keeping with our *mood:* Look at the fresh rosemary!—is (like those shrimp) virtually raw. Nonetheless, the hen took *time:* First, the skin was pinned down at the back to remove unsightly wrinkles. The bird was then cooked for fifteen minutes at about 500 degrees, for a nice, crispy, home-cooked look. Finally, the food stylist alternated between brushing the hen with an oleaginous mixture of water and Kitchen Bouquet—a "browning product"—and drying it off with a hand-held blow-dryer, until a juicy shine appeared. Ten or twelve coats and it was ready for the table. Of course, should the color later seem somehow *unnatural,* the skin can be made to look even fresher and crispier with Scitex, the computerized photo-enhancing system. Nothing is real for those wanting nothing but the best.

Shrimp and pasta? A splendid choice—very now, very Mediterranean, and very, very carefully prepared. It took the food stylist hours to find the perfect bunch of basil to yield two perfectly green-looking, fresh-looking, basil-looking leaves like these. Then an assistant on the crew properly boiled the pasta for about thirty seconds, leaving it raw and hard—just right for arranging. Finally, using a heating filament removed from a toaster oven, the food stylist took shrimp cooked only enough to turn them pink and painstakingly applied to each of them three perfectly spaced "grill marks."

Tom Thompson is a free-lance writer living in San Francisco

POSSUM

By Charles Baxter

The girl, Helena, was almost twice as old as her brother, Hector, and she considered herself twice as smart, although it was hard for her to judge, because he was young and therefore just naturally stupid. Plus, he was a boy, which made him brain-damaged from birth. She had nine years to his five, and, riding in the backseat in the middle of July, she had already tricked him out of his two quarters and his half of an M&M's package. She had told him that for fifty cents and some candy she would give him a snipe—a soft, furry animal that would sleep with him at night—once they got home, in Illinois. They were still crossing Ohio. She said Ohio should be outlawed, it was so flat and boring.

Up front, their father was driving and listening to his Walkman. Their mother was irritably sleeping.

Helena was an inventive and forceful bully, skilled at creating games only she could win. "Let's play 'Wzzat,'" she said, taking out the last M&M, a green one.

"What's 'Wzzat'?"

"Okay, okay, I'll explain," she said, raising her eyes to the ceiling as if everyone in the world except Hector knew how to play. "You close your eyes. You know how to do that, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Okay. You close your eyes. Then



I look out the window, and I see real things, but I can make up things too. And so I say, 'There's a horse.' And you can either challenge me and say, 'I challenge you,' and if there's a horse there, you lose. You get it?"

Hector nodded, even though Helena could see that he didn't get it at all.

"But maybe I make things up, right? And you can challenge me, and if it's not there, I lose, and then you get to be It. I mean, it's so simple even you can get it."

"I don't get it," he whined.

"Okay, okay," she said. "I'll close my eyes." She half-closed them, so she could detect a bit of something. "Now you look around, and if you notice anything, you can say what you see, or you can make it all up."

There was a long silence. At last Hector said, "I think I see a dog."

Helena could tell that there was a dog, a big black dog half a mile out in a farmer's field. "That's good," she said. "You get it. But the deal is, I wouldn't challenge you about that."

"I'm not finished," Hector said. "It's a dog from Mars."

"No, it isn't." Her eyes flew open like tightly sprung window shades. "It's just a dog."

"How do you know?" Hector asked. "I think it's from Mars. It looked a lot like a Martian dog."

"What do dogs from Mars look like?"

"Like that one." Hector smiled. "They have outer-space ears."

Helena sighed and raised her eyes to the ceiling again. She couldn't imagine being married to a human being with a penis, if her brother was any example of what she'd have to put up with. "Never mind," she said. "Close your eyes. If you don't believe me, just say, 'I challenge.' You got it?"

"I think so."

"All right. There's a fence."

"I challenge."

"Too bad. There's a fence there. See that stupid-looking fence?"

"I guess."

"Close your eyes again." She waited until Hector did so. She was feeling full of power and evil. "There's a llama."

"I challenge."

"Too bad for you. Look. Look out there."

"That's a horse."

"No, it's not. It's a llama."

"What's a llama look like?"

"Like a horse, except it's got more fur. Just like that one."

"I want to be It," Hector said. "You always get to be It. Why can't I be It?"

Charles Baxter's most recent [illegible] A Relative Stranger: a collection [illegible] (W. W. Norton).

Illustration by Tim Jonke

Helena could see "Wzzat" going down the drain unless she let him have a chance, so she said, "Close your eyes. There's a school with an H-bomb cloud coming out of it."

"I challenge."

He opened his eyes. "You win," she said. "I told the truth about the school but not about the H-bomb part. Now it's your turn."

She closed her eyes tightly this time. She didn't have to cheat in order to beat her brother at anything.

"There's a bird," he said.

"I don't challenge that."

"There's a dead person."

"Where?" She looked around.

"Out there." He pointed to a man painting his house.

"He's not dead."

"He could be."

"He could be, but he isn't, you idiot. He's painting his house!"

"Mom! Helena's yelling at me."

Their mother glanced into the backseat and then put her hand over her face.

"Dead people can't paint their houses. If they're dead they can't do anything. So I challenged you and I won."

"He was a zombie," Hector said. "He was wearing zombie clothes."

"What're those?" she asked, mildly interested.

"Black shirts and sneakers."

"All right," she said. "I'm It. It's my turn. He wasn't a zombie and he wasn't dead. Close your eyes." Hector followed her instructions, as he usually did. He was such a chump, she could only feel contempt for him, although she could remember loving him when he was a baby and she could hold him. That was before he learned to talk.

She saw a billboard.

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"There's a place with no gravity," she said.

"I challenge."

"Well, it's there." She pointed at the roadside attraction. "You go in there and you float up to the sky or something. Dad," she shouted, "how do they do that?"

"It's a tourist trap," their father said.

"So I win," Helena said.

"I'm getting bored with this," Hector told her, slumping down.

"One more." She saw a dead possum in the middle of the highway. "There's a wedding cake, right in the center of this freeway, and we just hit part of it."

"I challenge. I didn't hear us hitting anything."

"Oh yeah? Turn around and look." She pointed out the back window, at where they had just been. "See that white?"

"That's not a cake. That's dead. It's not in our lane."

"A cake is dead. Anyway, we hit it," she lied, "so when we stop next, there'll be frosting on the bumper, and you can taste it if you want to.

"All right."

Fifteen minutes later, they pulled into a rest stop. Their father limped off toward the rest rooms, and their mother got out of the car to stretch. Helena and Hector jumped out of the backseat and walked up to the front of the car, an old green Chevy Malibu. On the bumper, there were several dead insects, and, on one side, a small narrow streak of dry white residue.

"What're those? Bugs?" Hector asked.

"Cake decorations."

"Do they taste good?"

"Sure."

"Eat one then," he said.

"Not now. See that white over there?"

Her brother nodded.

"That's frosting from the cake. Taste it."

"Are you sure?"

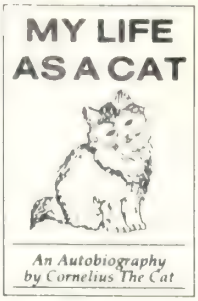
"Sure, I'm sure. Go ahead, Hector. Taste it."

He put his finger down, touched some of the white on the fender, spun around twice, took a finger out of his mouth, and said, "That's nice. It's sweet."

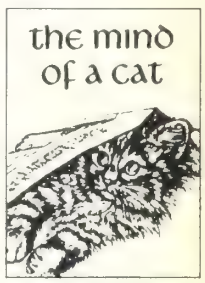
"Huh?" Without thinking, she

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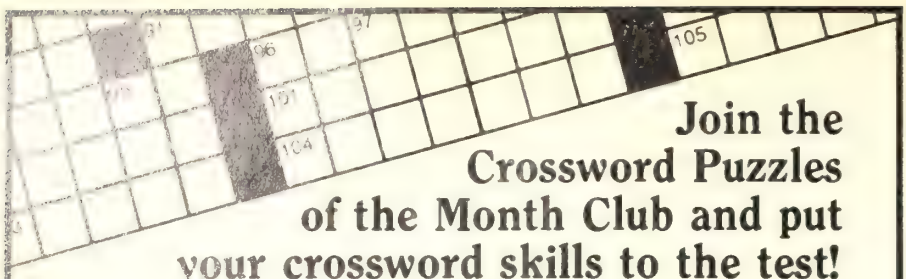


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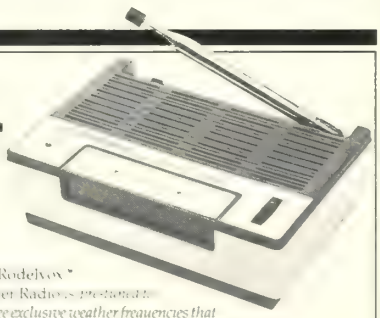
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put her finger on the bumper and then touched her tongue to that finger. It tasted terrible, like garbage or tuna casserole.

"I didn't taste it! I didn't taste it! I didn't taste it! I didn't taste it!" Hector screamed with glee. *"You just tasted bird poop!"* he yelled. He ran off toward the water fountain.

The thing was, it had looked like frosting, for just a second. She hadn't been totally fooled. Or maybe she had been, and it was the first time her brother had ever done it. He'd never manage to do it again, though. He was a boy, and he would stay stupid forever. ■

This story was commissioned by Susan Stamberg and George Garrett, who are editing an anthology of stories, to be published by W. W. Norton, whose plots turn on the presence, in the middle of the road somewhere, of a wedding cake.

Mav Index Sources

1 Ralph Estes, American University (Washington); 2 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; 3 U.S. Department of Defense/*Harper's* research; 4 Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (N.Y.C.)/*Harper's* research; 5 U.S. Department of State; 6,7 U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service; 8 *New York Times* (Jerusalem); 9 Samir Hulaileh (Jerusalem); 10 *Universal Almanac 1991*, John W. Wright, editor (Andrews and McMeel, N.Y.C.); 11 *Economist* Intelligence Unit (London); 12 U.S. Army (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia); 13 OMB Watch (Washington); 14 Greenpeace (Washington); 15 Campbell Soup Company (Camden, N.J.); 16 Paul Sladkus International (N.Y.C.); 17 *Washington Report* (St. Petersburg, Fla.); 18 Japan Council of Shopping Centers (Tokyo); 19 International Council of Shopping Centers (N.Y.C.)/U.S. Department of Labor; 20 London House (Park Ridge, Ill.); 21 Frito-Lay (Plano, Tex.); 22 Jericho Promotions (N.Y.C.); 23 American Correctional Association (Laurel, Md.); 24 Hallmark Cards (Kansas City, Mo.); 25 *Harper's* research; 26 Associated Press Photo Library (N.Y.C.); 27 Centers for Disease Control (Atlanta); 28 Charles E. Lewis, University of California (Los Angeles) and Kathleen Montgomery, University of California (Riverside); 29,30 National Insurance Consumer Organization (Alexandria, Va.); 31 Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve (Washington)/Office of Management and Budget (Washington); 32 National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators (Salt Lake City); 33 Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (Washington); 34 Norwood Cooperative Bank (Norwood, Mass.); 35 National LawCamp (Boca Raton, Fla.); 36 Worldpeace Camp (Camden, Me.); 37 Andre Van Pier, Inc. (N.Y.C.); 38 Boston Red Sox (Boston); 39 Rawlings Sporting Goods Company (St. Louis).

PURPOSE, BLAME, AND FIRE

An eight-year-old's introduction to war horror

By Donald Hall

My father was too young for the Great War, not fifteen when it ended, and both of my grandfathers were too old. Their fathers fought in the Civil War—archaic blue figures, stiff-bearded in photographs—but in 1937, when I was eight, Gettysburg might have been Agincourt or Marathon. As a second world war came closer, I understood that my father felt guilty about missing the Great War; but I understood that he wanted to miss the new one as well.

Everyone was nervous, the Depression hanging on and war approaching. I was an only child, alert to my parents' anxiety. My mother was thin and attentive. She had come to Connecticut from a remote farm in New Hampshire, and as I grew up I became aware that she felt lonely in the suburbs; she paid more attention to her child, in her displacement, than she would have done if she had stayed up north with her sisters.

Sometimes she took me on excursions to New Haven—Saturdays during the school year, weekdays in summer. We walked up Ardmore Street to Whitney Avenue and waited for the bus that came every ten minutes to roll us four miles down Whitney and drop us at Church and Chapel outside Liggett's across from the New Haven Green. While I tagged along, she shopped at Shartenberg's and Malley's. When we had done shopping, we ate lunch at a place where I ordered franks and beans—two grilled hot dogs and a tiny crock of pea beans dark with molasses; dessert was Jell-O with real whipped cream or dry yellow cake with white frosting. Lunch cost thirty-nine cents.

Then we went to the movies. At the theater we would see a first-run film, a B-movie, one or two shorts, previews of coming attractions, and a newsreel. In the year 1937 I am almost sure that I watched Spencer Tracy in *Captains Courageous;* maybe Paul Muni in *The Life of Emile Zola,* probably *Lost Horizon* and *A Star Is Born.* But the only movie I remember seeing for certain, some fifty-four years later, is *The Last Train From Madrid.* After we took the bus home to Ardmore Street, I burned my collection of war cards and put away my toy soldiers forever.

In 1937 we boys wore long woolen stockings pulled up over the bottoms of corduroy knickers as we walked to Spring Glen Grammar School. There were no school buses. Children from my neighborhood took several different routes to school—for variety or to avoid a bully—but always passed the Glendower Drug Store, only two short blocks from the school.

If we had change in our pockets, we spent it there. For a nickel, we bought big candy bars or flat pieces of gum creased into five sticks and pink as a dog's tongue. With the gum came cards that illustrated our different obsessions: Of course there were baseball cards, and I seem to recall cards for football as well; I remember G-man cards, each of which illustrated a triumph of law and order such as J. Edgar Hoover's agents flushing out Dillinger—shooting him in the lobby of a movie theater—or Pretty Boy Floyd. Although G-man cards were violent, they might have been the Society of Friends alongside another series that we bought and collected. We called them war cards, and they thrived in the bellicose air of 1937.

It was a time when the war in Spain shrieked from the front pages of newspapers, along with the Japanese invasion of China. In 1937 Stalin kept discovering to his astonishment that old colleagues had betrayed him; he shot seven of his best generals that year, doubtless a great advantage when Hitler in-

Donald Hall's tenth collection of verse, Old and New Poems, *was recently published by Ticknor & Fields. This essay will appear in* The Movie That Changed My Life, *an anthology to be published next fall by Viking.*

...rve a factual look at...

Arab-Moslem Fanaticism and Intransigence

Are *they* the root cause of Mid-East turmoil?

For the last five decades, the world has been convinced, mostly because of unrelenting Arab propaganda, that the conflict between Israel and the "Palestinians" is the root cause of the constant turmoil in the Middle East and that Israel should make "concessions" to the Arabs. But is that the *real* reason for the turmoil and for the violence? Or is there another, much deeper, more fundamental reason behind it?

What are the facts?

■ We Americans are reluctant to criticize or even to discuss the religions of others. We consider it a very personal matter. But the profound hatred of the Moslem Arab world against the West, especially against the United States (the "Great Satan") and Israel (the "Little Satan") can only be explained by trying to comprehend the psychology and the principal religious tenets of Islam. Islam is a world-wide religion, but it originated in Arabia and it survives in Arabia in its purest and most virulent form. The policies of the Arab countries are totally dominated by Islam. Islam believes itself to be in possession of the holy truth. In the name of that truth, any act of violence is permitted, sanctioned and encouraged. It is perhaps only with that understanding that the "strategic decisions" of Saddam Hussein, even with his armed forces at the edge of destruction, can be explained.

■ For the first six centuries after the Moslems spilled forth from the Arabian peninsula, they conquered much of the then known world, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. The Arab Moslems did in their ascendancy indeed give rise to a substantial civilization. But then, beginning with the expulsion from Spain, a long decline set in that lasted until the beginning of the 20th century. That decline was the more bitter, the more frustrating, because is was inflicted by the hated and despised "infidels". It was something that had to be remedied by whatever means. Injured pride had to be salved; the enemies who caused this humiliation and this painful injury had to be destroyed.

■ The 20th century brought national independence to the Arab states. Two other fundamental events occurred: 1) The discovery of the world's largest oil deposits under the Arabian peninsula, and 2) The creation, in 1948, of the state of Israel, which ever since its birth has been the concentrated focus of hatred and venom of all Moslem Arabs, a hatred that unites them, even surpasses their hatreds against each other, and that has launched them into five disastrous wars against Israel. Even the rape of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraq was explained as being a step towards the "liberation of Palestine", a claim so bizarre, so patently absurd that it can only be comprehended and given credence by a mind obsessed with the ideology of Arab Islam.

■ The obsession of the Moslem Arabs with Israel is totally irrational. To have Israel, an advanced highly civilized Western outpost, as an independent country in the middle of the Arab-Moslem world is utterly intolerable to them. That is the reason that the 21 Arab states, among them the richest countries in the world, with a combined population of more than 200 million and with a land area greater than that of the U. S., have since the beginning of the century concentrated obsessive ferocity by military, economic, ideological, political, diplomatic, and any other means to destroy the tiny Jewish community of Palestine, and its successor, the Jewish state of Israel -- only 4 million people in a country just one-half the size of San Bernardino County in California.

The recent events in Iraq have sobered many who had believed the Israel-Palestinian conflict to be the cause for the unrest in the Middle East. The fact is that war is endemic in the Arab world and that the Moslem Arabs have been waging war against each other and against their non-Arab neighbors for centuries. But, as much as the Moslem Arabs hate each other, they are all united in their greater hatred against the "infidel Jews" and their tiny country, and they have built vast war machines for the ultimate "jihad" to chase the Jews into the sea. The insincere focus on the Palestinian plight is designed to divert attention from the many domestic problems and inter-Arab conflicts, and to direct the Moslem Arab frustration against Israel, the "infidel Western outsider". The suggestion that Israel divest itself from its historic heartland, the 2,362 sq. mi. "West Bank", would be a step toward its strategic suicide. The real cause of the never-ending turmoil in the Middle East is the unremitting desire of the Arab Moslem states to destroy Israel, their inability to come to terms with its very existence. That hatred and that intolerance are fueled by Arab-Moslem fanaticism and intransigence and unwillingness to accept diversity in the region. Only when that can be overcome can peace and tranquility finally come to the Middle East.

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vaded. In 1937 Trotsky found his way to Mexico, the UAW invented the sit-down strike, Neville Chamberlain asked Hitler for his cooperation in the interest of peace, the *Hindenburg* exploded and burned in New Jersey, and thousands of American progressives joined the Lincoln Brigade to fight fascism in Spain.

Even in the fourth grade we knew about Hitler, whose troops and planes fought alongside Franco against the Loyalists, who were aided by Stalin's troops and planes. Germany was again the enemy, less than twenty years after the Armistice of 1918. We were good, brave, loyal, outnumbered, and victorious against all odds; they were evil, cruel, cowardly, vicious, dumb, shrewd, and doomed. We knew who was right and who was wrong. (My father's mother's family had emigrated from Germany to New Haven in the 1880s, which was confusing.) In 1937 all of us—parents, teachers, children—understood that there would be another war and that America would join this war sooner than it had the Great War. Isolationists and pacifists campaigned against the war, but everyone knew that war was inevitable—whether it was or wasn't. A phenomenon like war cards makes it now seem as if we were being prepared, as if the adults were making sure that we grew up expecting to become soldiers, accepting the guns and the bombing and the death.

At least no one—so soon after the Great War—had the temerity to present war as a Cub Scout expedition. When we went to the movies, we saw a newsreel and sometimes even *The March of Time*. The late 1930s were endless parades in black and white, soldiers marching, weapons rolling past reviewing stands. I remember the bombing and strafing of refugees. I remember Hitler addressing rallies.

War cards used a lot of red ink. On the back of each card a short text described a notorious incident, and on the front an artist illustrated what had happened. I remember one card that showed a Japanese bomb hitting a crowded Chinese bus, maybe in Shanghai: Bodies

being torn apart hurtled through the air, intestines stretched and tangled, headless bodies littering the ground. I don't believe these cards were particularly ideological; as I recollect, the cards claimed to be educational, illustrating the Horrors of War. Blood was the whole matter.

We cherished our war cards, chewing gum as we walked home to add a new one to our collections: Blood of war was the food on which we nurtured our boyish death-love. If you got a duplicate you could swap, maybe the exploded bus for a card that showed the shelling of a boat. We collected war cards as we collected ourselves for war.

Surely, at eight, my imagination was filled by war. I loved airplanes and read pulp stories about dogfights over the trenches. I loved the pilot heroes of the era—Wiley Post, Amelia Earhart, later Wrong-Way Corrigan. When I imagined myself going to war it was to join the Lafayette Escadrille, fly Spads, and shoot down Fokker triplanes.

Then I saw *The Last Train From Madrid*. Did it really change my life? As I commit it to paper, the phrase sounds exaggerated, melodramatic. I never registered as a C.O. (Nor did I serve in the military.) Although I worked in Ann Arbor with the movement against the Vietnam War, I was never a leader. Neither did I spell the country Amerika. It was war horror that filled my chest, not political commitment: A horror is not an idea, as a shudder is not a conviction. Certain horrors of war retain the power to burst me into tears, especially the random slaughter of civilians. And my first experience of such horrors, I now believe, must have occurred on the day in 1937 when I saw *The Last Train From Madrid*.

In September of 1990—as another war approached—I saw *The Last Train From Madrid* again. Over the years I had thought of the film often and assumed that it was antifascist, popular front. It is no such thing; the film is astonishingly without political ideology. The plot is derivative, built of romantic clichés and stereotypes, and is impossible to take seriously: a *Grand Hotel* on wheels. The writing is ghastly, from clumsy exposition to flat dialogue. Its single import is the randomness of war horror.

The film opens with the hurtling image of a locomotive and train. A radio newscast tells us that tonight the last train will leave Madrid, after which—we understand—the city will be overrun by the nameless army that is besieging it. The army lacks not only name but idea, and its only purpose is death. As characters speak of the train's terminus in Valencia, Valencia becomes pure symbol: The destination is Arcadian peace in a countryside antithetical to the city's panic, chaos, and violent death. Naturally, everyone wants a seat on the train. The plot of the movie turns on separate and intermingled stories of people seeking passage on the train—their stratagems, their failures and successes. At the end of the movie the train steams out of Madrid carrying some of the people we've been introduced to and leaving others behind—not only behind but dead.

A noble young officer (noble because he is handsome and stands straight, noble because he is Anthony Quinn) listens at the film's beginning to impassioned pleas for passes, and in his dutiful nobility refuses them. We dwell on an old lady, well played, who begs for a pass and is refused. Most of our central figures are in couples, two by two like the ark's animals: the romantic interest, which I doubtless ignored in 1937 and found myself ignoring last fall. Love between two men (Anthony Quinn and Gilbert Roland) who swore blood brotherhood as soldiers in Africa years before is standard *Beau Geste* stuff, but it does provide the strongest human bond in the film—stronger for sure than the bonds each seeks to establish with Dorothy Lamour.

In one of the subplots a slaphappy American journalist (Lew Ayres) picks up a girl (Olympe Bradna) who wants to get to Madrid to see her father before the firing squad kills him. (Naturally, they fall in love; later, this pair makes it onto the Valencia-bound train.) She sees



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her father, he is shot—and we never receive an inkling, not a *notion*, of what he did or stood for that led to his cold-blooded execution. The killing feels wholly arbitrary: No motive is supplied or suggested. In this film's eerie political emptiness, execution by firing squad is not a political act (and thus in some way purposeful) but routine, everyday—like sunrise and sunset.

One soldier on the firing squad (Robert Cummings) is tender-hearted and will not fire his gun. For his sensitivity he will be sent to the front. He runs away—and runs into an unbelievable love. We see two people parting, a man and a woman whom we do not know. We understand that they have just made love, and that she is a prostitute. They seem fond of each other, happy, making plans for their next encounter. As the man walks into the street, we suddenly spy his shape down the sight of a rifle—a sniper's rifle. The sniper shoots him dead. Although we may assume that the sniper waited for this particular man, the film provides not one detail to support this assumption. We know nothing of this man or his killer or any motive; we know nothing about the shooting except the brute fact. Like the earlier execution by firing squad, this street killing—idyll destroyed by bullet—presents itself as wholly arbitrary.

It is this young prostitute (Helen Mack) with whom Cummings falls in love—and she with him—immediately. After Mack and Cummings drag her dead lover's body into her flat, they talk; Cummings wants the dead man's pass for the last train. Soon enough, they scheme a double escape. During their brief courtship, the couple construct of their lovers' talk the Arcadian Valencia to which the train will deliver them. Cummings eventually makes it to the train, but alone. Mack dies on the way—again arbitrarily.

By today's standards, of course, there are actually few deaths in *The Last Train From Madrid*. Channel-surfing the television—happening, say, upon a Chuck Norris movie—you will see more carnage before you can switch channels than you'll

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observe in eighty-five minutes of this old film. But the deaths I witnessed in 1937 stuck with me as those I see in movies today for the most part do not. One in particular: Near the film's end, before the train leaves the station, guards move through the cars rechecking passes. As they demand papers from everyone, our anxiety mounts because they are approaching a vulnerable protagonist. Suddenly, looking at one man's pass—a stranger to us—the guards ask him to step outside. He looks nervous; he tries to run—and they shoot him down. They kill him *on purpose*, aiming their guns, yet they kill him *for no reason* that we will ever understand.

Murderous paradox drives the film: Malignity exists everywhere, yet most of the time it appears motiveless. To an eight-year-old in New Haven, the particular individuals shot and killed in the film suffered deaths as arbitrary as if they had been killed by bombs from the sky. An air raid takes place at the center of the film, a riot of civilian panic, people running and frightened. The sound track plays fear music, camera shots are jumpy and angular, and in one quick shot nervous pigeons scurry.

In Robert Frost's "Design" he writes about the malign coincidence of an invisible spider haply arranged to kill a fly; the poet asks what could have caused this coming-together except for "design of darkness to appall." Then he qualifies the question in a further line: "If design govern in a thing so small." In *The Last Train From Madrid* we are surrounded by fear of imminent death, but, horribly, we lack design. As humans, we wish or perhaps even need to understand the cause or to place blame—on an enemy, on politicians who betrayed us, on the cupidity or moral squalor of a person or a class of people—because blame implies purpose, and purpose, meaning. *The Last Train From Madrid* suggests that design may not govern in a thing so small as human life and death.

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Continued on page 78

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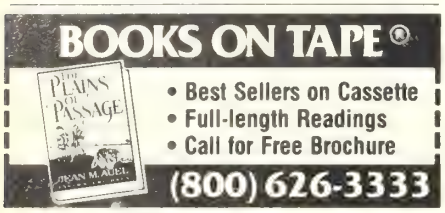
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Continued from page 75

movie will not uphold or defend either side of the war. When we read of battles in old histories we study the motives of each side, although the cause may mean little to us: We want to make sense. We may not keep with us the ideas behind a conflict—what we tend to remember are stories of heroism, cowardice, and suffering; "The river ran red with blood for seven days," we remember, not "Thus Centerville retained its access to the sea." Yet we make the effort to understand the history and politics, if only to satisfy ourselves that there appeared to be reasons for the blood: a design. By eschewing history and politics, *The Last Train From Madrid* leeches war of its particular temporal context, providing an eight-year-old with his first glimpse of war as eternal anonymous suffering. The film scrolls war's utter panic and sorrow. Oh, sorrow, sorrow, sorrow—the ripe life cut by hate without purpose, by anger lacking reason, by murder without blame.

How did my mother happen to take an eight-year-old to such a movie? Microfilm of the *New Haven Register* explains. The newspaper printed paragraphs of studio puffery that wholly misrepresented the film: "With but two pictures to her credit, both of which were outstanding successes, Dorothy Lamour, the glamorous brunette, one of the season's most sensational 'finds,' moves into the ranks of the screen's charming leading ladies. The event takes place in 'The Last Train from Madrid,' the romance laid in war-torn Spain." I find it breathtaking to read this notice of the film that horrified me. "In this story Miss Lamour appears as a beautiful patrician girl, who is the beloved of a young lieutenant in the government forces and his best friend." When I read Frank S. Nugent's *New York Times* review (6/19/37), I am almost as astonished. He notes the lack of politics in this "glib little fiction," but for Nugent also there was no horror. "True, it treats of the Spanish revolution, but merely as Hollywood has, in the past, regarded the melodramatic turmoils of Ruritania and Zenda." He calls the film "a pre-tested melodrama which should suit the average palate," and in his conclusion makes a joke: "Its sympathies, neither Loyalist nor Rebel, are clearly on the side of the Ruritanians."

Frank S. Nugent was not eight years old. Was Nugent's cynicism more appropriate than my horror? At eight, I ignored the silly romance at the film's center and registered only the panic of unmotivated murder. When I returned home after the Saturday matinee, I packed my lead toy soldiers with their flattish Great War helmets into a shoebox and tucked it deep in the long closet of my bedroom. I performed the ritual with so much solemnity that I might have played taps for background music. By this time I felt not panic but a sadness that would not relent, which may have derived from another melancholy that absorbed me that weekend. The film opened in New Haven on Saturday, July 10, 1937, while Amelia Earhart was missing over the Pacific. I remember playing outside the house, keeping the window open and a radio near the window; I remember a report that the Navy had spotted her plane on an atoll; I remember the correction of the report. In my mind's eye, Amelia Earhart circled continually, high in the air, the hum of the Lockheed's engine distant and plaintive, gas almost gone, the pilot in her leather helmet peering for land as she circled . . .

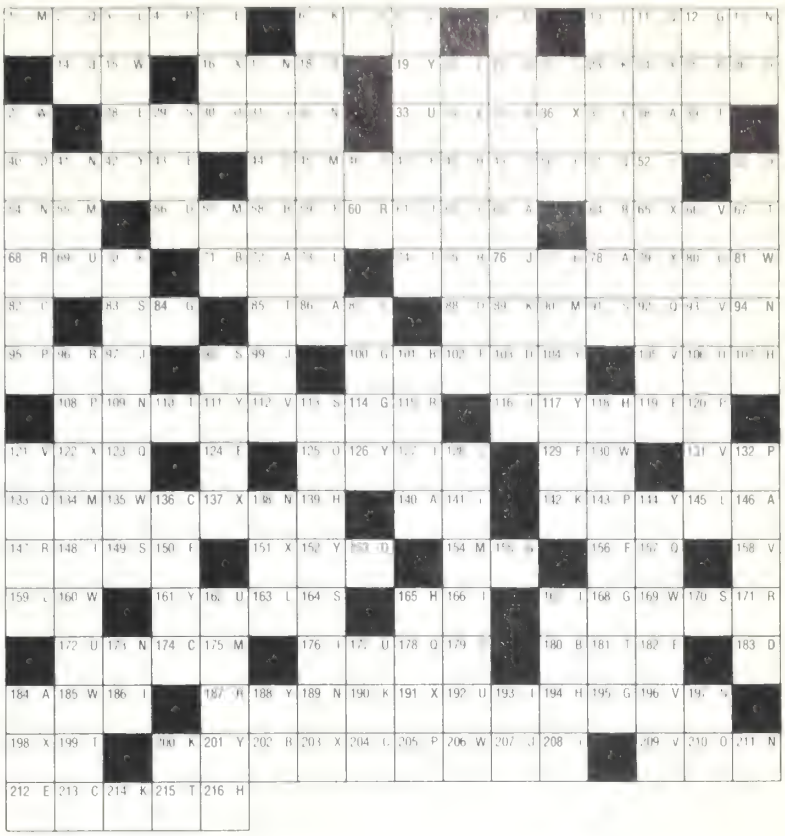
A day or two later, alone in the house, I carried my war cards down to the coal furnace in the cellar. I was not allowed to open the furnace door, but I opened it anyway and threw the cards onto the red coals. At first they smoldered and turned brown, and I feared that they would not burn—would give me away when my father came home and stoked the furnace. Then one card burst into bright yellow flame, then another, then all together flared briefly in the shadow-and-red hellfire of the furnace on Ardmore Street. ■

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 101

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 74.



CLUES

WORDS

A. Eng. playwright (1881–1913; *Hindle Wakes*)
86 184 146 63 72
78 140 38

B. Conducts, runs
101 180 58 77 202
71 35 64

C. Interlaced, intermingled, contrived, fabricated
82 136 174 213 204

D. Junkies, dependent persons
53 183 153 9 103
40 26

E. Copies, replicas
5 34 28 119 43 50 182 124
20 62 212

F. Impelling, vigorously active
150 102 156 47 129 59 39

G. Configuration of the opening of a hockey game (hyph.)
100 12 114 195 168 155 84

H. Something that becomes part of food as a result of processing or packaging
48 139 107 7 194 165 118 216

I. King of Portugal, 1557–78, subject of a Dryden tragicomedy
208 52 176 193 148 166 61 127
186

J. "Then come kiss me, sweet and ____" (*Twelfth Night*)
97 167 76 116 31 99

K. Limited
200 89 23 214 142 190 6

L. Argentine romantic poet (1805–51, *La Cautiva*)
163 145 10 87 3 73 128 141
37 159

M. Devised, contrived
154 57 90 45 1 134 175 55

N. Fool, simpleton
211 109 54 17 32 41 173 189
94 138 13

O. Fabled monster, part eagle, part lion
88 30 18 44 125 210 106

P. Carousals, sprees
70 95 108 132 205 120 143 4
49

Q. Weakened, deprived of strength
2 133 178 92 51 14 157 11
123

R. Pro rata shares
60 187 75 25 68 115 96 171
147

S. Mother of Queen Elizabeth I, second queen consort of Henry VIII (2 wds.)
29 113 179 91 98 83 170 149
197 164

T. Horrible, shocking, revolting
22 74 67 215 85 46 110 181
199

U. Theory that the myths of gods arose from the deification of dead heroes
69 56 172 177 21 162 80 192
207 33

V. Dealt with roughly
131 66 93 158 105 209 121 198
112 8

W. Finessed, got the better of by cleverness
81 169 27 181 135 152 12 206
160

X. Subtlety, craftiness (2 wds.)
122 30 141 65 203 16 137 79
198 24 191

Y. Similarity, likeness
201 117 144 104 188 161 111 42
152 19 126

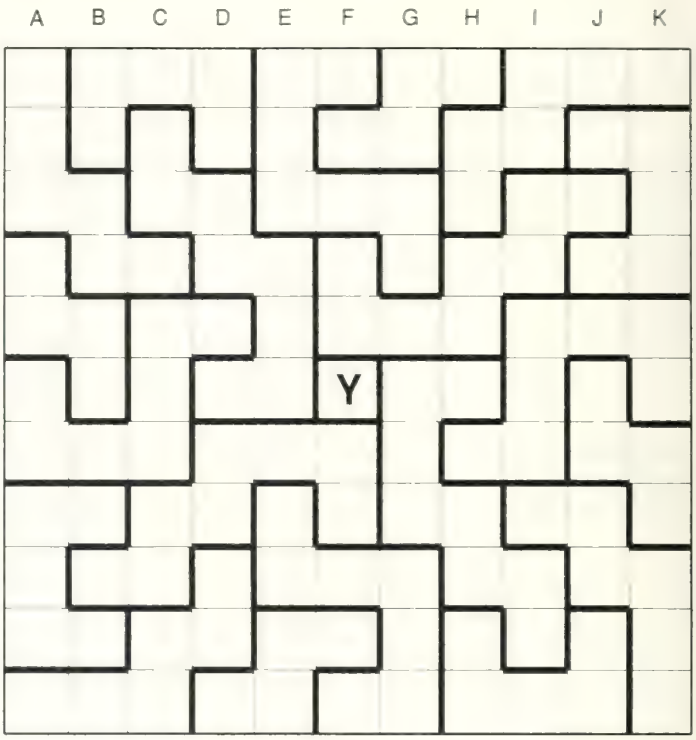
PUZZLE

Jigsaw

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.

Each column is occupied by two nonoverlapping Down entries, clued in order of length, not position. Superimposed on these entries is a pattern of 21 jigsaw pieces. Except for the center one, which is already in place, each piece contains a clue answer, entered beginning at one end of the piece and proceeding square by square in order to its other end.

Clue answers include a couple of variant spellings, one capitalized word, and some less than common words (2, 11, 15, the second B). The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 74.



Down

A. Backs like Roscoe, making a comeback (5)
Embroidery basket filled by wife (6)

B. Romantic interlude I had briefly left, concealing yen (4)
"Eastern convert, pray around church here!" (7)

C. Leader of unit cools off back in Army mess (5)
Can't I, possibly, with time, become perfect (6)

D. Mint chocolate chip? Nothing popular (4)
Lady embracing rotter—this paves the way (7)

E. Nonsense connected to a papal tribunal (4)
Fat herring . . . or table scraps (7)

F. Toots, you're crazy (4)
My son, roaming around New York, worthless for bum, e.g. (7)

G. Harmony and tempo limiting Sibelius's Fourth (5)
Raise two male turkeys, tropical American bird . . . (6)

H. . . . male swan, tailless rodent, and snake (5)
Salome's head, cut off John the Baptist, e.g., a wise guy (6)

I. Bikini, for instance, one with ruinous price (5)
Quiet cable broadcast beginning on MTV (6)

J. Fruit with center removed: large, pretty stone (5)
Creates anger in topless joints (6)

K. Remarkable, outspoken tot (4)
What's unamiable—suppressing wave (7)

Jigsaw Pieces

1. Knots produced by Navy sub maneuvering (4)
2. Squeals heartlessly, revealing rural agreements? (4)
3. Set time for tearoom . . . one loves to be taken out (4)
4. How a simple farmer starts vegetables (4)
5. Dance band is collecting clothes (5)
6. Axe-wielder hauled initially to jug (5)
7. Don't start using words . . . or a series of shots (5)
8. My, the French, reversing order, get kind of yellow (5)
9. Macramé baskets filled with very small animals (6)
10. Foot lady's broken around Connecticut (6)
11. Stopover for traveler—it accepts horse (6)
12. Pole's small boat and large fish initially capsized (6, *two words*)
13. Part of custom at atomic plant openings (7)
14. Unfinished manicure ruined . . . where are your brains? (7)
15. Scottish fellow, upset, rents fine fabrics (7)
16. Some singers could be bad actors . . . including Newton (7)
17. Very restricted circle to gain lamb roast (8, *hyph.*)
18. Where early Christians hid from lion, e.g., and a cold, unruly mob (8)
19. Eastern European prohibition, one in a land that's cut off (8)
20. Toss bit of ore to mine—this operation takes nerve! (8)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Jigsaw," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the July issue. Winners of the March puzzle, "Lapt Lights," are John Czepiel, Hamden, Connecticut; Edward Dube, Washington, D.C.; and Lieselotte Hofmann, Forestville, California.

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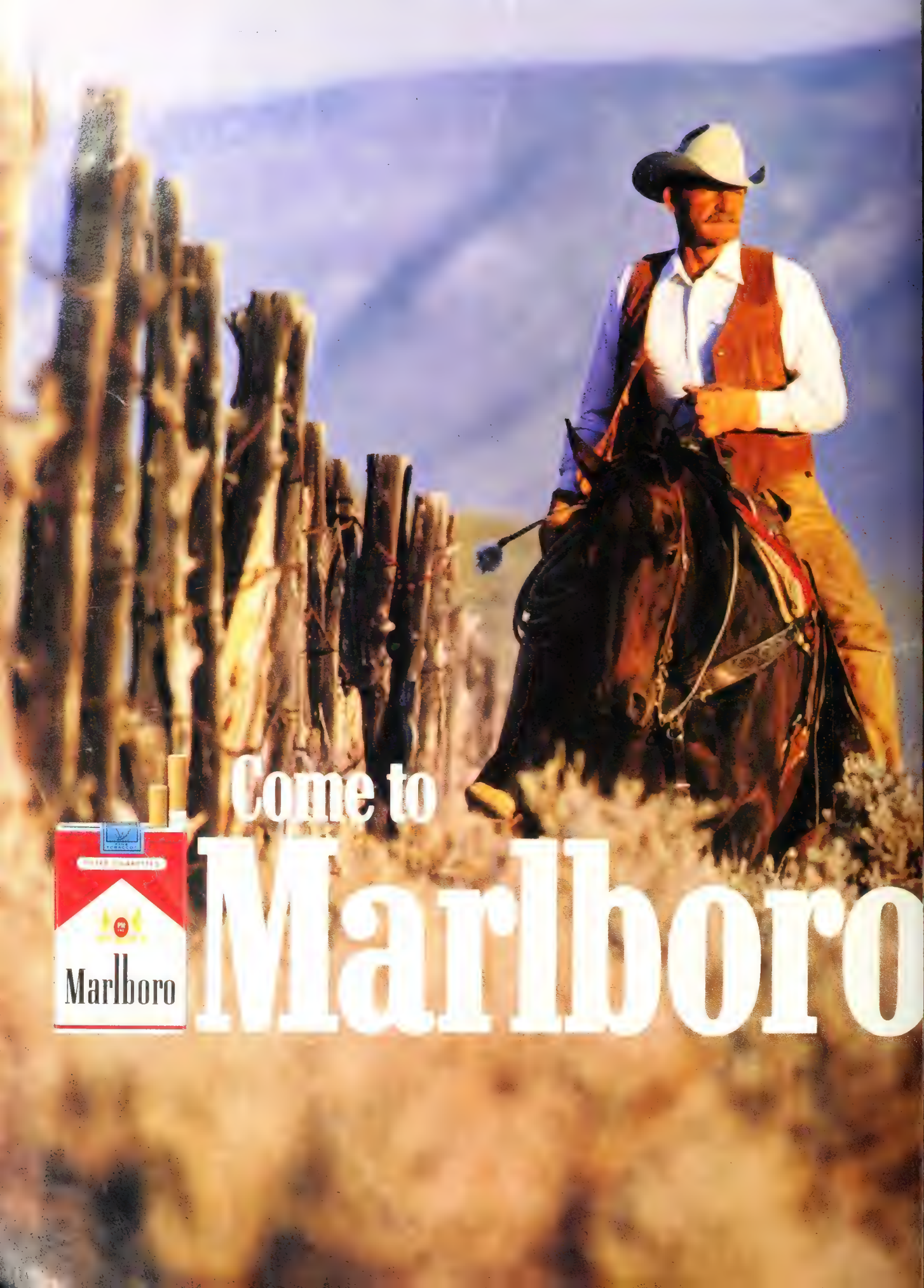
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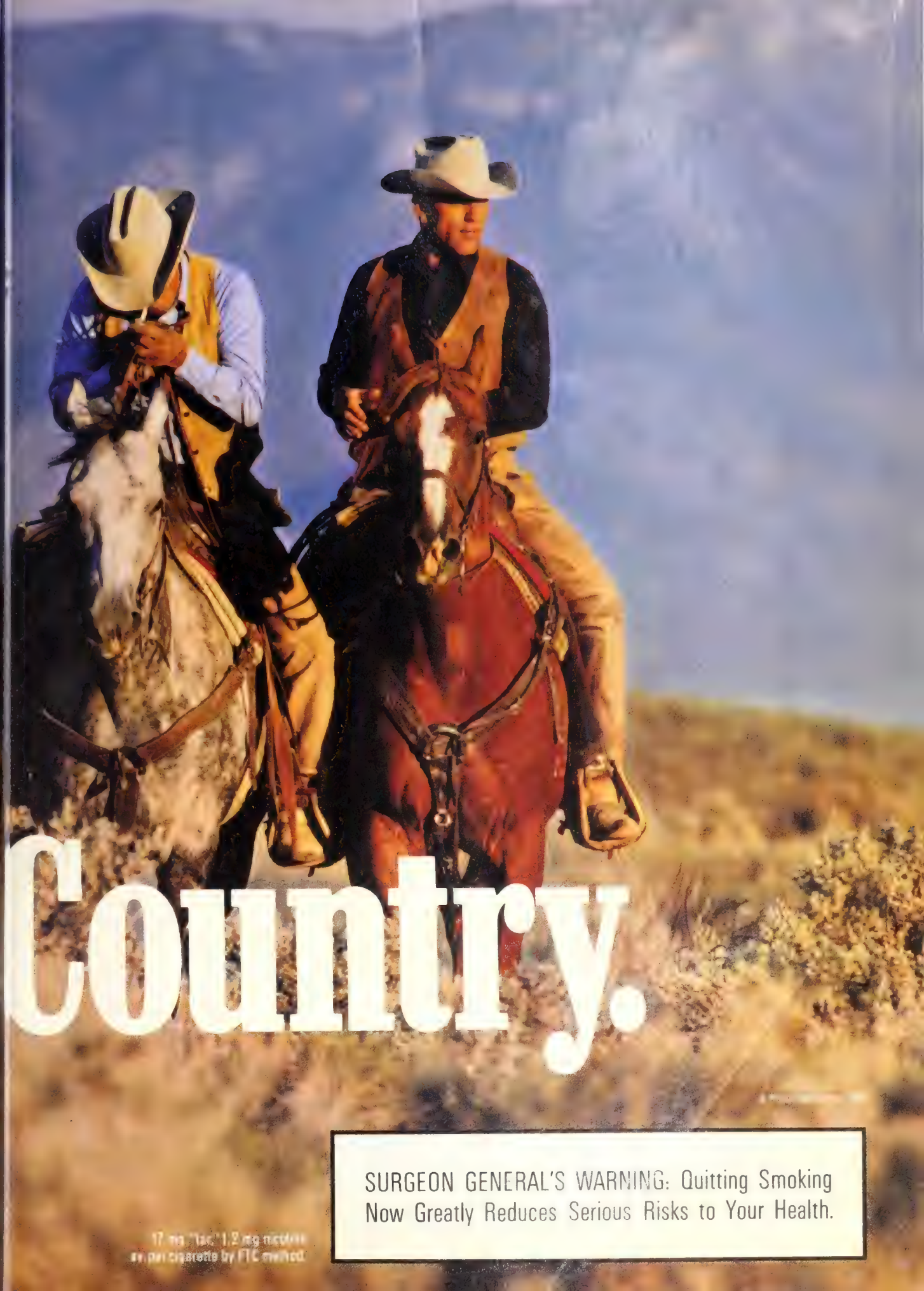
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JUNE 1991

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LETTERS

The Word on Image Culture

Listening to cultural critics Camille Paglia and Neil Postman chatter over baked sea urchin ["She Wants Her TV! He Wants His Book!" March] is as good a secondary experience as sniffing sex off the mustache of a guy in the subway. The two of them clearly had fun wrestling over whether images or words are—or should be—preeminent in our culture, but what's the spectator to make of such silliness as Paglia's defense of and Postman's attack on an advertisement for Hebrew National hot dogs? For Postman, the ad takes God's name in vain; for Paglia, it's a reaffirmation of the sacred. They are both out to lunch—or, in this case, dinner—in some reinterpretive frenzy that leaves both hot dog and God somewhere between the beignets and the seared scallops.

Only slightly less silly than their earnest nods to the "sacred" is their argument over who is physically less active—the TV watcher or the reader. Paglia says the reader is passive, which is why professors, who are readers, can't communicate with their multitrack TV-watching students. Postman agrees. The tube-watching couch potatoes of America can now ignore their rolls of fat. They can imagine themselves alert and athletic instead, eating roast monkfish on savoy cabbage instead of Cheetos, nachos, and chips. The godawfully passive TV-watching electorate, which generally stays home to watch the soaps on Election Day, can now imagine itself in charge.

Paglia's argument is like a TV news opinion poll: It reflects *back to* the media what the citizen has already seen and heard *from* the media. But Postman is not any more astute, with his starchy insistence on "emotional continuity," "reason," and the use of "humor" as a tool. He comes off as precisely the kind of sober, spectacled intellectual whom Paglia spoofs.

Unless TV watchers become critical about what they watch (an impossibility), they'll be far easier to manipulate than readers. Ironically, Paglia wrote a *book* to explain the power of images, so both of our conversationalists have to be read to be imagined. Their argument is purely bookish; on TV, they would make *Firing Line* look positively hip.

Andrei Codrescu
New Orleans

Camille Paglia is noteworthy for her freedom from intellectual cant and for her keen sense of the enduring appeal of paganism. The defense of television that she proposes, however, is overstated in some important particulars. She insists on converting partial and imperfect correspondences between the old

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

and the new into absolute continuities.

In quick sequence, she identifies the experience of television with the familiarity of the Catholic Rosary, the outrageously indiscriminate quality of nature itself, and the alternating rhythms of emotion and contemplation in Greek tragedy. All these analogues are farfetched.

Referring to ads as "soothing litanies that make us feel safe and familiar and at home in the strange modern world," she neglects the pervasively secular and commercial character of television. While it may be true that different kinds of repetition are soothing, the repetition of ritual is ordained by tradition on the assumption that the ritual is keyed into a system of cosmic correspondences, that ritual aligns those who practice it with a divine scheme. *Some* viewers may actually be soothed by watching a hundred replays of the same Miller Lite commercial, but there is surely no larger efficacy to the commercial. The clear intent of the repetition is to sell Miller Lite by a behavioristic imprinting of the images upon the consciousness of the viewer.

Nature, as Paglia notes, assaults our fragile frame of moral reference with baffling disjunctions and violent transitions. But to laugh at a dignified gentleman slipping on a banana peel and only then to discover that you have a fatal disease is a consequence of sheer *randomness*, while the alternation between programs and commercials, at regular fixed intervals, is the result of careful calculation for mercenary purposes. When a representation of the mass murder of European Jews is interrupted by thirty seconds of female models in swimsuits extolling airline travel to vacation spots, I experience the transition as a grating vulgarity dictated by corporate hucksterism, not as one of nature's blindly cruel "ironies" and surely not as a withdrawal to the philosophic perspective of a Greek chorus.

Television commercials do, of course, exert a certain fascination. My own preference is to watch them with the sound turned off, so that they become a kind of abstract

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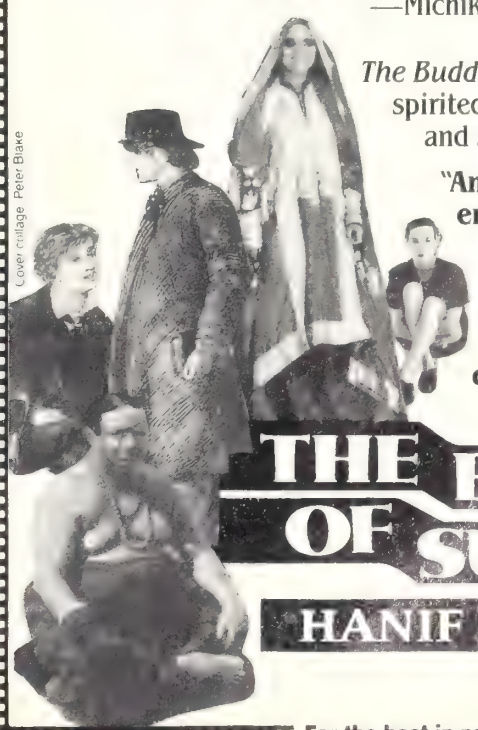
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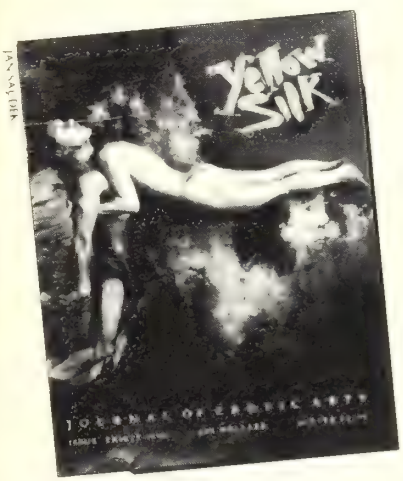
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visual art without the sales-pitch voice-over. But the fact that television has undeniable visual allure and expressive power is no reason to imagine that it fulfills the role in our culture that sacred cult or solemn art served in an age more nakedly exposed than ours to man's scary place in the vertiginous realm of nature or in the awesome order of the divine.

Robert Alter
Berkeley, Calif.

As a writer for the CBS *Evening News*, I find that people who criticize TV news are often unable to describe accurately what they're talking about.

Neil Postman talks of watching Dan Rather report that 5,000 people died in an earthquake, then say, "We'll be right back after this word from United Airlines."

That's not how it goes. Dan Rather *never* introduces a commercial or mentions a sponsor. On the CBS *Evening News* and all of the leading newscasts, news sections normally end with a preview of stories to come, followed by what we call a "bumper"—a few seconds of video and music, or a wide shot of the studio, with the title of the broadcast superimposed. The reason for the bumper is *precisely* to separate news from the commercials; to avoid, or at least ease, the "discontinuity of emotion" that Postman finds so unnatural.

Camille Paglia argues, rightly, that discontinuity is not unnatural; life itself is broken up. TV news, like all art, is an attempt to put the pieces together. Commercials are just something we have to work around.

Tom Phillips
New York City

Camille Paglia's dismissal of academic feminism leads me to think that although she may be able to keep up with the intricacies of commercial television, she hasn't had much contact with recent feminist criticism. According to Paglia, "One reason American academic feminism is so mediocre is that these women can't think their way out of a wet paper bag. They have absolutely no training in logic, philosophy, or intellectual history, so they're reduced to arguing that we should throw out Plato and Aristotle because they're dead white males, or some such nonsense. That's so dopey and ignorant." Apparently, Paglia experienced 1960s feminism firsthand—1968 college graduate that she is—and then got stuck watching the reruns. Contemporary feminist critics are more likely to discuss the social construction of gender and condemn the type of categories that Paglia sets forth than to malign white male historical figures or their genitalia.

I don't know what Paglia means when she refers to the mediocrity of American academic feminism, nor which women she thinks are "dopey and ignorant" (terms that reveal, I suppose, her training in logic and philosophy). If Madonna needs Paglia to interpret her videos, maybe Paglia in turn needs to have her criticism interpreted by a contemporary feminist. She may not be happy with the results, however.

Camille Paglia doesn't have to be a feminist because she happens to be a woman, but as a scholar she should be professional enough to recognize the validity and scope of feminism as a tool for cultural analysis. At the very least, she might read some current feminist criticism before she dismisses it as mediocre.

Audrey Bilger
Charlottesville, Va.

As educators, we see the disturbing implications of Camille Paglia's argument every day in our classrooms. Symbols and images are like ultraviolet light: They bombard and penetrate without our awareness. As Paglia points out, watching television is a "passive but highly efficient process of storing information to be used later." But because there is no a priori moral or intellectual discrimination or filtering, does that mean that our minds must become toxic dump sites for all the junk on TV, much of it sexist,

racist, violent, or jingoistic?

Unlike his dinner counterpart, Neil Postman is willing to address this problem. Educators must acknowledge their role as mediator between two sets of societal values: the dominant, television-driven set, which rewards self-aggrandizement and moral passivity, and the subordinate set, which is rooted in critical reflection. Paglia condones what we call the Bart Simpson Syndrome—the ability to separate moral concerns from an all-consuming quest for material and personal gain. As long as one doesn't get caught in flagrante delicto pillaging for personal gain, then it's okay to do so. Indeed, since the height of social status seems to be reached only by amassing the material trappings for success, the screw-your-neighbor ethic is given an approving nod and wink.

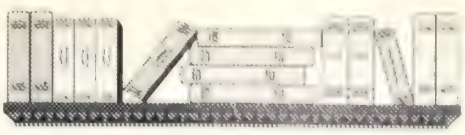
Perhaps Paglia actually believes that life is television and television is life. So it would seem from her professed belief that the collage of juxtapositions on television, which sells Preparation H in the same breath that it reports a nuclear-waste spill, accurately represents a world in which all events "have equal weight." In the telling, albeit televised, words of Dana Carvey's Church Lady, "How *convenient*." God forbid that we have to step out of our role of voyeur and make a moral decision.

Kenneth D. Bush
Ithaca, N.Y.

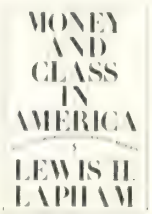
Kevin J. Bush
Ottawa, Canada

Nietzsche would have laughed at the idea that television, which smacks of his "idols" and "flies of the marketplace," somehow encourages the Dionysian spirit, as Camille Paglia avers. He argued that true Dionysian spirit, which enables us to be philosophical about the cruelty of existence, springs from courageous action and real confrontation of the challenges that life offers—not the "wretched contentment" of spectatorship, which merely deludes us into thinking that pain, drama, and violence exist and are resolved only in and by the requirements of

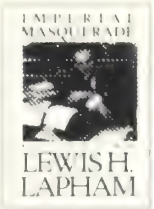
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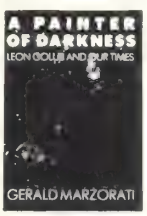
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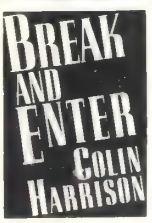
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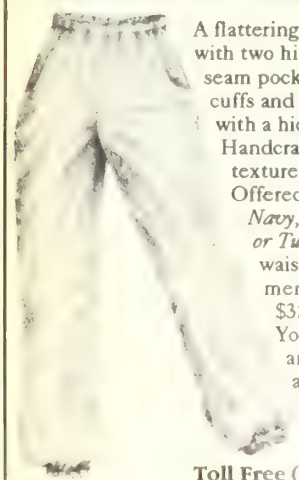
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If anything, television has weakened us and helped bring about the gutless America Lewis Lapham described in his essay "Democracy in America?" [November 1990], where "the wish to be cared for replaces the will to act." Today's couch potatoes—should we call them couch *vegetables*?—are at least as sedentary as Paglia's imagined literates and not nearly as analytical. Neither are they participating in a rebirth of paganism. They demonstrate only that the masses are satisfied by the modern equivalent of "bread and circuses."

Michael Williams
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Ignoring the political and commercial fingers turning the dial to their own ends, Camille Paglia instead chooses to see TV as a mirror of a pagan reality driven underground by Judeo-Christian rationalism. Claiming that "the madness of TV is the madness of human life," she again misses the point. Literature and philosophy, as written in books, seek to explain the absurdities of life; if I read Paglia correctly, TV merely celebrates the absurd and reveals nothing.

Postman's acquiescence in this conversation suggests the demeanor of a Platonic stooge. Couldn't *Harper's* have extended a free dinner to a more competent advocate of the art of reading? In labeling literacy a "Faustian bargain" that results in some sort of atrophy of "the cerebral development of the senses," Postman suggests that readers are only capable of reacting to the world like computers, incapable of intuition. Readers are not exclusively book-bound; they exist in the world, drink too much, sing too loudly, occasionally wreck their cars, play sports, and so on. Most frustrating of all was watching Postman fail to take advantage of his home turf—the printed page. Postman should have paid less attention to his baked sea urchin and more to the task at hand.

David R. Koukal
Waukegan, Ill.

A pox upon both Camille Paglia and Neil Postman for their shallow discussion of television versus literature. Their infatuation with intellectual process over commercial product was particularly demonstrated by their gloss of the ABC-TV show *Charlie's Angels*—they both thought the show was about *hair*.

Postman says, "I came to understand *Charlie's Angels* when I realized that the entire show was about *hair*." Paglia says, "And do you realize that the Farrah Fawcett hairdo of *Charlie's Angels* can still be seen today in every shopping mall in America? . . . Her old Seventies hairstyle is still the dominant look for boy-crazy girls in American high schools. Awesome, really."

Really? What *Charlie's Angels* was *about* was three women who hired out to investigate people that their off-camera boss suspected of wrongdoing. To that end, they misrepresented themselves to suspects and others with all manner of outright lies; they broke into suspects' dwellings, offices, files, etc. They did all these sneaky things without benefit of court order, priestly sanction, or wink from Dick Tracy. They also flaunted a great deal of skin.

At the end of the dinner conversation, Neil Postman states the crux of his argument: "What worries me is that if school becomes so overwhelmed by entertainment's metaphors and metaphysics, then it becomes not content-centered but attention-centered, like television, chasing 'ratings' or class attendance." In the context of this statement, his focus on hair in *Charlie's Angels* is worrisome.

Paglia concludes, "It is time for enlightened repression of the children." Perhaps a hairstyle other than Farrah's could be promoted. But could it artfully conceal pointy heads?

Buryl B. Noah
Winchester, Va.

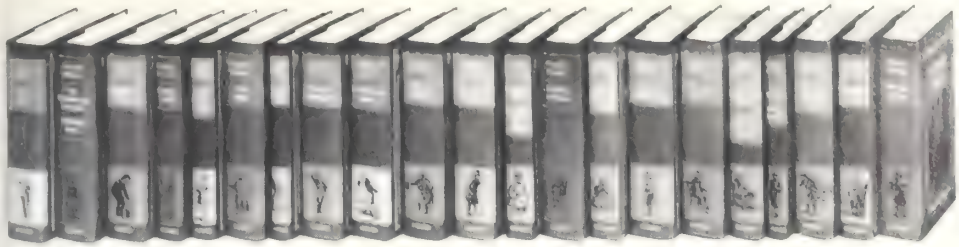
In the Etymological Bag

In his letter to his agent (Readings, February), in which he traces the etymology of "croker sack," Franklin Burroughs Jr. states that

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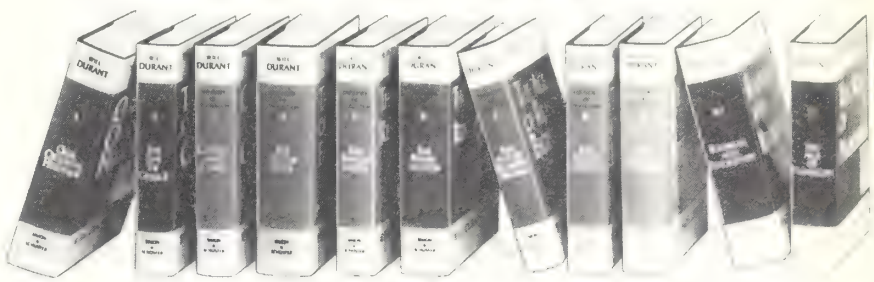
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only dictionaries of Americanisms carry a definition of the phrase. More specifically, he writes, "The *Oxford English Dictionary*, all twelve volumes of it, plus supplements, records nothing for *croker* (or *croccer* or *croaker* or *crocus*) sack, bag, etc. Croker sacks are purely American."

However, naked-eye inspection of my compact edition of the OED reveals an entry for *croker*.The entry reads as follows: "Cro-ker. *Obs. rare.* [app. f. CROCUS-US + -er1.] A cultivator or seller of saffron. **1557** HARRISON *England* iii. viii (1877) II.57 The crokers or saffron men." While not defining "croker sack," the OED presumably wishes us to infer that such a sack is used by crokers, perhaps to carry either saffron itself or crocus bulbs, which are used to make saffron.

Moreover, contrary to Burroughs, the OED does combine "crocus" with "bag." Under the heading of "crocus," entry five reads as follows: "**5.** *attrib.* and *Comb.*, as *crocus-bag, -bordered* adj., *-flower, -powder* (=3b), *-scent.*" There follows a reference to a 1699 publication by a J. Dickenson: "[For clothing] I . . . had a Crocus Ginger-bag." Although the date is different by three years, it would seem possible that this quotation is from the same Jonathan Dickenson identified by Burroughs as publishing a book in 1696 in which he details being shipwrecked, washed ashore, and forced to construct makeshift clothing out of available materials. However, the OED reference is admittedly puzzling; perhaps "crocus" is being used here to define a color. At one time, various yellow or red powders obtained by calcination of metallic materials were described as "crocus"—e.g., "crocus of iron."

Whatever the precise origin and meaning of "croker sack," it appears to me that the OED has done a good job and does not deserve the strictures of Burroughs.

Ronald Bentley
Pittsburgh

I do not take issue with Franklin Burroughs Jr.'s etymological approach, but I question his expertise in the dialectology [illegible] America. I was struck with fu[rious] upon reading his comment regar[ding] ing the transition of the pronunci[ation] tion of *crocus sack* to *croker sac*[k]: "*Croker* came into being when the of *sack* swallowed the *s* of *crocu*[s] leaving *crok-uh*, which then su[c]cumbed to what is known as th[e] retroflexive final *r* (I think this [is] the same thing you hear in the w[ay] that many people, including th[e] entire population of Massachusett[s] pronounce *parka: parker*)."

Having been born and raised i[n] a beautiful area known to it[s] inhabitants as western Mas[s]sachusetts, more specifically, th[e] Berkshires, I deeply resent this pre[-]tentious example of the "retroflex[-]ive final *r*." Burroughs either doe[s] not know his geography or ha[s] never ventured west of Boston t[o] view the rolling green hills of west[-]ern Massachusetts and to speak t[o] people who neither pronounce[] *parka* as *parker* nor *Harvard* a[s] *Hahvud*. I would urge Burroughs t[o] keep to his etymological roots o[f] South Carolina, for we in western Massachusetts need not his gener[-]alizations.

Christine F. Pigott
Stockbridge, Mass.

Among the various possibilities for the origin of "croker sack," Franklin Burroughs Jr. posits that it comes from "croaker," "a small, abundant fish of the drum family, which can be caught in any tidal inlet." Says Burroughs: "For all I know, they might have been caught by the sackful . . . it is easy to imagine two men dividing up the day's catch and one saying to the other: 'Look, you take the croakers and I'll take the *croaker sack*.' "

Nice try. Native Floridians use a "croaker sack" to contain frogs ("croakers") that they capture on midnight expeditions. Doesn't everybody know that a frog is a croaker? I am this surprised that "cracker" Burroughs didn't consider this possibility.

Dorothy H. Miller
Virginia, Minn.

NOTEBOOK

Field of dreams

By Lewis H. Lapham

We play gladly and think gladly because in these activities we feel ourselves masters of the situation: The space of play and the space of thought are the two theaters of freedom.

—Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy

Every year the baseball season comes north with the spring, and every year it arrives with a costlier roster of great expectations. The newspapers bloom with a show of statistics, and the sportswriters wax poetical about the hard stuff (Gooden's or Ryan's) and the sunlight on the outfield grass that reminds them of their youth and early sorrow. Literary critics submit testimonials about baseball as the sublime American metaphor and the proof of Paradise regained. Television broadcasters chatter about the season's new contracts ($3.8 million for Strawberry, $3.5 million for Canseco and Raines, etc.), and the cognoscenti in the mezzanine seats behind third base talk about the good old days when the beer was still cold and the players still wore belted uniforms made of cheap but sturdy wool.

During the first weeks of the season, watching the home teams in four cities run out onto the field in the top of the first inning, I was moved to a feeling akin to pity. The players drag with them the burden of making good on so many of the nation's promises (temporal as well as spiritual) that they stand virtually no chance of victory. Brave men and true, of course, and faithful to the memory of Comiskey Park and the Bambino, but working against increasingly heavy odds because the crowd demands so much more than even the best of them can deliver.

If it were simply a matter of making the long throw from right field to the plate, or hitting for extra bases with men on second and third, the team just might bring it off, just might rally in the bottom of the ninth to rescue the national dream of innocence. But it isn't merely a question of the score—or the season's average, or the number of strikeouts or passed balls or double plays. It's the business of sustaining the belief that the American democracy still works the way that Jefferson said it was supposed to work, that the American people still speak a common language and hold to a common definition of the good, the true, and the beautiful. The boys of summer perform a kind of tribal dance meant to restore at least a semblance of meaning to the nation's most cherished hopes. If the Kansas City Royals can get it right (or the Red Sox, or the Twins, or even the Cubs), then maybe so can the mayor and the Congress and the chief of police.

The weight of metaphysics falls on all American athletes, on high school sophomores as well as twelve-year veterans in the NFL, because it is in the realm of sports that the American ideal of a meritocracy still passes the test of experience. Nobody scores any points for his sincerity or his status as a victim of circumstance. The manager isn't obliged to start the kid in centerfield because the kid is black or Choctaw, or because the kid's father owns the team, or because the sponsors prefer a Young Republican. Like the infantry platoons that won the Hollywood version of World War II, an American team in good working order erases the distinctions between race and class and rehabilitates the principle of justice under law. The rule is the rule, and even Rickey Henderson sometimes goes down on strikes.

Elsewhere in the society the rules admit of too many exceptions, most of them venal. The schools bend the standards of measurement to the whim of intellectual fashion; business adheres to the practice of the rigged bid and the safe monopoly; politicians hold themselves accountable to nothing except the majority opinion; the lively arts rely on the dubbed voice, the government favor, and the track of prerecorded laughter. Given a nation in which so many cannot read and so few take even a cursory interest in history, it is the lexicon of sports that binds together the text of a common memory. The box score and the portrait on the bubble-gum card take the place of Shakespeare and Vermeer. JFK and FDR vanish into the oblivion of old campaign slogans, but Ruth and Dempsey and Grange remain vividly in mind, still reminding us of who we were and who we might become.

The playing field is the holiest of American grounds because it is the place where time past retains the light of time present. The ghosts sit in the stands of all the American arenas—the gridiron, the court, the racetrack, and the ring—but

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nowhere can they be seen so plainly as in the baseball park. The great, good American game takes place in the American Garden of Eden. On the far side of the left-field wall, the agents of death and time go about the dismal work of the world's corruption. Wars come and go; the family business fails; the bank forecloses the mortgage on the farm; and the child dies in a spring flood. But inside the park the world is as it was at the beginning—as green as the grass of childhood, as safe as mother and home. If only the game could be made to last forever, then everybody's best hope still might remain plausible, and nobody would ever die.

It is this feeling of nostalgia for an undetermined future—for the good news certain to be disclosed in the next inning, the next town, the next marriage, the next at bat—that V. S. Pritchett once described as the "emotion of being an American." The emotion remains in force, but every year it becomes harder to preserve and defend. The home teams play not only against Cleveland or St. Louis or Detroit but also against the cynicism of the television networks and the indifference of the big money. In place of the traditional scoreboard in right center field (behind which a spotter slides the numbers into a slot), a television screen sells Florida real estate and exhorts the fans to neon exclamations of joy. Instead of walking into the game from the bullpen, slowly and with an ambling gait, the relief pitchers (early, middle, and late) arrive in golf carts or small Japanese cars. The same owners who paper the walls of the media with unctuous statements about "the honor of baseball" gratefully accept advertising from Atlantic City casinos. If they were assured of enough money in the deal, they would find reasons to stage a World Series at 3 A.M. in a bullring in Mexico City, the players equipped with color-coordinated bats and the umpires dressed as Ninja turtles.

By now it's not much of a secret that big-time sports is big business—more precisely, the entertainment business. The promoters put their scruples out on waivers, and the fans insist not only on freak sensations but also on moral fables.

Given so large and anxious a crowd of expectations, it's not surprising that even mediocre ballplayers command annual salaries of $900,000 for doing little more than lending their presence to the lineup. Like the nation's schools, the nation's athletes inherit the estate of the nation's disappointment. They play to even the score with everything else that goes wrong in the world, and when they stumble into the foul territory of a gambling or narcotics arrest, they find themselves condemned as enemies of the state. If a dentist or an insurance salesman indulges a taste for sodomy or cocaine, he can be forgiven the error with the observation that he belongs to the dunghill of common humanity. But the athlete walks on sacred ground, and the rituals of purification that attend his fall from grace surpass in their pomp and solemnity the comparable acts of contrition imposed on wayward politicians or criminal financiers.

First, the repentant millionaire, mumbling inaudibly into the television cameras, apologizing to his mother and his coach, saying what he is told to say about how he didn't mean to desecrate the name of so noble a sport. Second, the alarmed commissioner, awarding a fine and a penance, which, if the player knows what's good for him, he gratefully and promptly accepts. Finally, the choir of owners and sportswriters, proclaiming in pious unison the next generation's need of exemplary heroes, explaining that once again, and thanks to the courage and high character of all concerned, the stadium has been cleansed of any and all chemical additives or impurities.

The catalogue of baseball stories published in the country's newspapers during the decade of the 1980s attests to the general preoccupation with what might be called the environmental aspects of the game. Research commissioned in 1989 from a company that provides computer access to hundreds of papers and wire services turned up an order of priority that the Nexis News

Monitor listed as follows:

1. Drug abuse (6,071 articles)
2. Contracts and salary arbitration (2,459)
3. Labor strikes (2,196)
4. Corked bats and other illegalities (1,601)
5. George Steinbrenner (1,592)
6. Racism (1,381)
7. Pete Rose's gambling (1,364)

The hierarchy of alarm places the emphasis on the wrong line of the box score—on the protection of the game as holy writ, not the playing of the game as an act of the imagination. For more years than I care to remember, I've listened to the complaints of the cognoscenti behind third base as well as to the elegiac moans of the literary class (both the colloquial and academic divisions), but I've never been much impressed by their lament for a lost world. Yes, it's true that a bumbling designated hitter earns more than the Chief Justice of the United States (so does Michael Jackson and a half-blind umpire); and yes, it's also true that the television schedules and Astroturf bend the game into unfamiliar shapes. So what? Baseball, like democracy, accommodates itself to a Brooklyn sandlot or an Oklahoma wheat field. The batting order, like any other political alliance, always proves to be expedient and temporary.

Again in keeping with the American promise, baseball is a means, not an end. It's not about health or virtue or moral uplift. It is about the making and remaking of the unity of thought and action, about the trying for the perfect line of the hit-and-run, about the moment in which time, distance, energy, and mass come together at a point of complete coherence. It's not about scores or gate receipts or old uniforms, which is why it survives George Steinbrenner's egoism and the bad translations into newspaper cliché. The game evokes a sense of hope and freedom because it enlarges the realm of spirit. To watch a ballplayer make an otherwise unimaginable catch in left field extends by that many inches, or by that fraction of a second, the reach of human possibility. ■

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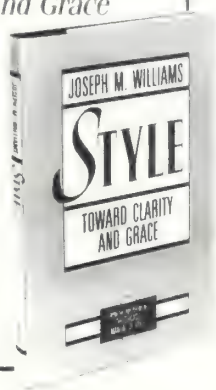
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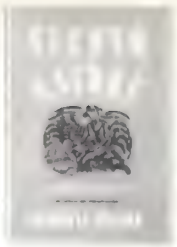
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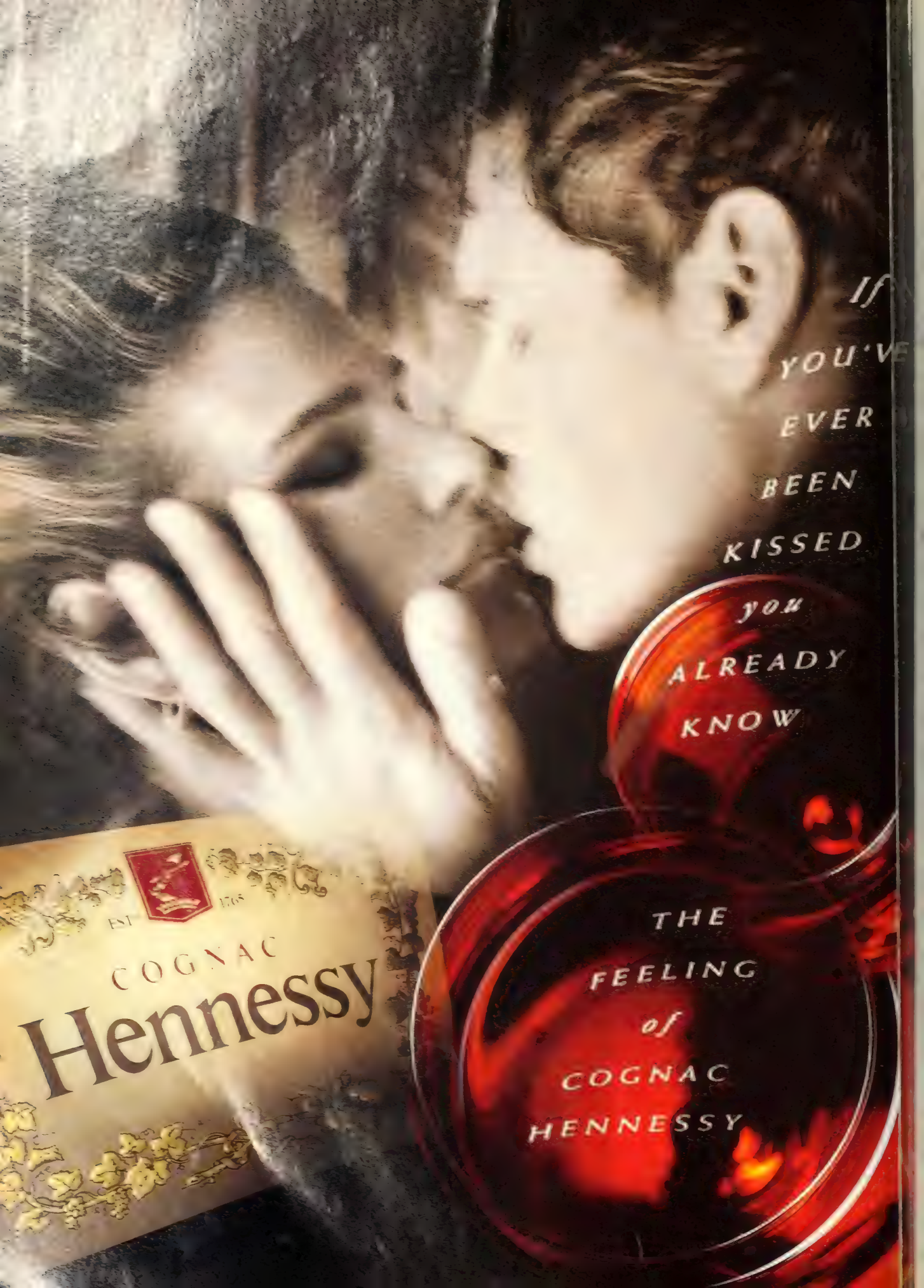
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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of U.S. businesses that failed during the six weeks that the United States was at war with Iraq : 9,905

Portion of all office space in the United States that was built during the 1980s : 1/3 (see page 51)

Portion of all office space that is currently vacant : 1/5

Value of U.S. residential real estate sold at auction last year : $28,000,000,000

Number of residential units the Resolution Trust Corporation plans to give away this year : 2,000

Number of U.S. law firms the federal government is suing for "violating their duties" to S&Ls they represented : 45

Percentage change, since 1988, in the number of doctors whose licenses have been revoked by state medical boards : +15

Average number of complaints of excessive force lodged each day against police in the three largest U.S. cities : 14

Amount the city of Los Angeles paid out in settlements of police-brutality suits last year : $8,699,431

Rank of José, among the names most often given male babies born in Los Angeles County this year : 1

Number of U.S. city governments that have extended employee health benefits to unmarried "domestic partners" : 6

Number of "domestic partnership" announcements in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* this year : 4 (see page 38)

Average cost of an American wedding, expressed as a portion of the median annual income of a family of four : 2/5

Tons of gold made into wedding rings in the United States each year : 17

Percentage increase, since Iraq's defeat, in daily sales at the Frederick's of Hollywood near Fort Campbell, Kentucky : 300

Number of toxic waste sites located at domestic military installations : 17,482

Number of years since the city of East St. Louis has been able to afford to collect residents' trash : 4

Average number of American farmers who die from asphyxiation in manure pits each year : 3

Average amount of milk an American dairy cow produced last year, in gallons : 1,703

Average amount a cow produced in 1950, in gallons : 618

Chances that a cup of coffee drunk in the United States in 1963 was decaffeinated : 1 in 33

Chances today : 1 in 4

Percentage of Americans who say that time moves "too slowly" : 7

Chances that a patient in a U.S nursing home is sedated or physically restrained : 1 in 2

Percentage of Americans who say they watch "too little" television : 23

Amount of cash CNN reporter Peter Arnett says he wore sewn into his clothes while covering the Gulf War : $100,000

Number of the 440 animals in the Kuwait City Zoo that survived the war : 29

Number of Kuwaiti roller coasters Iraq dismantled and moved to Baghdad after last August's invasion : 1

Number of roller coasters at the Cedar Point Amusement Park in Sandusky, Ohio : 10

Amount of cash found on the Cedar Point grounds last year by its maintenance crew : $5,300

Value of the jewelry Madonna wore to the Academy Awards last March : $20,000,000

Number of the world's five largest record companies that are owned by Americans : 1

Number of U.S. universities that offer a bagpipe major : 1

Chances that a harpist has back problems : 3 in 4

Estimated number of Americans who have had wires, screws, pins, nails, or plates surgically implanted : 4,400,000

Number of years the inventor of Vaseline is reported to have ingested a "glob" of it daily : 72

Percentage of all peanut butter that is chunky : 40

Average number of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches an American consumes before reaching adulthood : 1,500

Amount of chewing gum collected each year by the maintenance crew at the Statue of Liberty, in pounds : 600

Figures cited are the latest available as of April 1991. Sources are listed on page 67.
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READINGS

[Letter]

EVICTED: A RUSSIAN JEW'S STORY (AGAIN)

From "I'm Not Fleeing, I'm Being Evicted," by an anonymous Russian woman, in the March/April issue of Tikkun: A Bimonthly Jewish Critique of Politics, Culture & Society, *published in Oakland, California. The letter originally appeared in* Ogonyok, *the Moscow weekly. Translated by Melvin Kornfeld.*

A gigantic queue in front of the American Embassy. Today, the 36,124th person has been placed on the waiting list. The majority are Muscovites, but many have come from other cities—Tashkent, Kiev, Zhitomir, Vilnius, Novosibirsk, Kishinev. I, too, am standing here waiting for what everyone else is waiting for: an application to leave permanently for the United States.

Afterward, I would have liked to have gone home—I had spent six hours standing in the cold—but instead I went to the New Zealand Embassy. There, too, I registered; fortunately, I was only number 79. Numbers were supposed to be checked at 5 P.M. and it was only noon, so I walked through the center of Moscow, through streets that I've always loved. It was very cold, damp, and windy and I wondered: Just what has happened to you and your country that you, who were born here and have lived here for forty years, are running around in the rain in your native city looking for some way to leave forever? And why is it that nearly 40,000 of your fellow citizens are silently crowding in front of the gate of a foreign embassy?

The reason I am leaving is not because there is no meat, sugar, boots, soap, cigarettes, almost nothing in the country. And not even because the reward for any work is unimaginably small. Of course, all of that is terribly humiliating, creates bad blood, and probably even shortens our life spans. But no, that's not why I'm leaving.

I'm not fleeing; I'm being evicted. For me it's not emigration but rather evacuation. I don't feel like a rat abandoning a sinking ship so much as a dog driven away by its evil master. And all those silent people in front of the American Embassy? Somehow one doesn't see in their faces even the slightest anticipation of joy at the prospect of a heavenly life in a utopia where there are no problems with meat and soap, where the feet of each inhabitant are shod, I imagine, in no fewer than ten pairs of boots. These emigrants are anything but the dregs of society. For the most part, they are quite cultured people, and well dressed—some even have cars. What's driving them into exile? What can they be looking for there?

That's easily explained. They share one disadvantage that makes them unfit to live in the country in which they were born. They are Jews. I, too, am Jewish. My passport says so. Though, in all honesty, I have always felt I was as much Russian as Jewish. Not anymore, because now I live in a country where the "Jewish Question" exists. Now I know I am a Jew, since those splendid lads of Pamyat [the right-wing, nationalist movement] have promised to squash my kind like bedbugs; because the pensioner in the adjacent house regularly recommends we scram to Israel;

because when I drag a drunken woman from the street, passersby make it immediately clear to me that we alone have led the Russian people to drink. Suddenly, there is a certain "we" of which I am a part.

Perhaps—no, probably—it is regrettable, but before I was born, Jewish culture had already been lost in my family. My great-grandfather was a religious Jew; my grandfather, who fell in World War II, wrote his letters home from the front lines in Hebrew; my grandmother knew only a bit of Yiddish; my mother knows neither Hebrew nor Yiddish. To my shame, I confess that except for Sholem Aleichem—whose work belongs more to the realm of world classics than to Jewish literature specifically—I have read no Jewish authors. I learned to read at the age of four. My first reading material was Lev Tolstoy. I discovered Tsvetayeva and Akhmatova at fifteen; Pasternak and Mandelstam at nineteen; Gumilyov not until twenty-three. All of this is mine. And paintings. And music. And the landscapes. And the churches. And the villages. And it was here my grandfather fell. When the war began, he was fifty-four and had just had a serious operation. No one demanded that he go to the front. When my mother began to sob, pleading, "Papa, stay home! You're still sick and there are so many younger and healthier," he replied (I've heard it a thousand times from Mother and Grandmother), "What's the matter with you, my dear daughter! If everyone spoke and thought that way, who would defend our country?" This is our homeland.

NOW I AM AN ENEMY, IT SEEMS—THE MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY MY COUNTRY FACES

Or so I used to think. Now I think somewhat differently.

In 1987 I was walking on Gogolevski Boulevard—it was at the beginning of the era of *glasnost*—and I saw a group of people crowding around a newsstand reading an article with keen interest. I was curious to see what the excitement was about. The article in question was one of the first written about an organization called Pamyat. I no longer recall how it happened—maybe I accidentally said something, or perhaps it was the fault of my eloquent nose—but a lively discussion developed between them and me. My God, what horror overtook me! It was a completely new and unfamiliar horror, not a fear of violence or a fear for my own safety, but rather a fear mixed with revulsion, a fear mixed with embarrassment. Standing around me were not primitive, uncultured people. They were genuine intellectuals, people with good faces, slim hands, who spoke excellently, without restraint and with conviction. But, oh, what they were convinced of!

Me: What are you people talking about? Admittedly, in Russia there were pogroms, but the Russian intelligentsia were always repelled by them. They hid the Jews in their homes and protected them with icons. And today you're—

Them: Yes, and look at the results! This very liberalism is what has driven Russia to the edge of the present-day abyss. Give us time and we'll annihilate all of you in the name of Christ.

Me: Listen, I'm not your enemy. We grew up in the same country; we read the same things. Russia means Lev Tolstoy for me, too. I've just come from the Pushkin Museum—

Them: Typical! The Jews who grew up in the Russian culture are the most dangerous, because they work from the inside.

So now I am an enemy—the most dangerous enemy my country faces, it seems. My people and I must get out of here or be annihilated. I and my mother, evidently, who worked hard for fifty long years in the thankless Soviet legal system. And my Gentile husband, who, evidently, is now no longer a talented journalist but a collaborator in the Zionist conspiracy. And my son, the half-Jew, who ended his first love affair because his girlfriend didn't care a fig about Russia's destiny.

• When the thousand-year anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church was celebrated, we didn't go, as planned, to the seat of the church in Zagorsk. Instead, we sat in our Moscow apartment behind a locked door while my husband deliberated with my juridically knowledgeable mother about whether he should fight back if they should break in. Pogroms had been announced for the anniversary day. We found obscene leaflets in our mailboxes. Apartment doors were marked with crosses.

• I come home after shopping. As I walk into my own courtyard, my path is blocked. "Hey, you Jew swine, show me what you have in your shopping bag! It's you who are consuming all our meat!" (So they've finally discovered the cause of hunger in our country.)

• At the editorial office of a progressive newspaper, two sweet women of my age approach me, hissing into my face, "Leave amicably before we slaughter the lot of you!" Later, as I am walking down the corridor with a journalist friend, two employees pass and I hear a sen-



From In Health *magazine.*

tence fragment: "—and 24 percent of the department bosses are Jews!"

People try to console me: "Pay it no mind. You can be certain there won't be any pogroms. The government won't permit them." I believe that. The present government needs pogroms about as much as my mother and I do. But is the government strong and ubiquitous enough to prevent them?

I fear for this country. I have studied history. I know very well what can happen when a country degenerates into national hysteria. And I have no desire to be a witness, completely powerless to change anything. It is intolerable when an entity to which you were once inseparably bound rejects you as if you were some sort of foreign body. I do not fear for myself; it seems almost demeaning to be afraid of them. But I regret having to fear each day for my husband, who is accustomed to joining every street discussion about Jews. Someday he'll get a knife in his gut or a pistol butt to his head as the definitive argument from one of his opponents. I do not want my son to be asked by his fellow students what he's doing associating with that Jewish girl. I don't want to see my eighty-year-old mother killed by a criminal—reborn as a patriot—that she defended during her lifelong career as a lawyer.

I no longer want anything from this country. I no longer wish to be of use here—even after striving long and hard, and successfully, to contribute my talents to the good of my nation. When I emigrate, I shall take nothing along. I need nothing of yours. I'll have no homeland, nor do I need one, not if it doesn't need me. I want only peace and security for my family, nothing more.

Moreover, if my emigration contributes to Russia's salvation, then fine, so be it; I am prepared to sacrifice myself for the high Pamyat ideals. Who knows? When I have finally withdrawn from the Russian culture, perhaps peace, happiness, and prosperity will immediately come to Russia. Excellent! That would make me happy. Except that I don't believe it. I don't think that two people in a house will live peacefully and harmoniously simply because they've expelled a third. Hatred that rages in souls and suddenly loses its immediate object does not disappear without a trace. It will turn against those who remain.

I wish this land only good. But why don't we—no, *you*—learn a lesson from these bitter truths? Why don't you see that happiness and prosperity cannot be built on the blood and tears of others? So many times in the past you have shot and driven others away and still you have not found happiness. You say you've shot the wrong people? Then try again. Maybe you'll have better luck this time. But without me. Tomorrow I'm going to the Australian Embassy.

[Examination Materials]

NOW, GIVE ME MY HANDGUN

The materials below were distributed in March by Michigan State Police headquarters to the state's local police departments. In January the Michigan state legislature passed a bill that rescinded various restrictions on the sale of handguns, including a ninety-day state residency requirement and regulations in certain communities that required prospective handgun owners to take a four-hour course on gun safety. In place of these restrictions, the bill substituted a ten-question true/false test, to be taken by all applicants for a handgun license. A score of seven or more correct answers qualifies an applicant to purchase a handgun. According to the new law, which took effect on March 28, applicants must be shown the information pamphlet below before taking the test; if the applicant answers fewer than seven questions correctly, the officer administering the test must show the applicant the correct answers, and then allow him or her to take the test again.

INFORMATION PAMPHLET

—You should treat every pistol as if it were loaded.

—You should always keep the barrel of a pistol pointed in a safe direction.

—You should never put your finger on the trigger until you are ready to fire at a proper target.

—On a semi-automatic pistol, you should keep the safety on and/or the action open unless firing.

—It is illegal to loan a pistol to another person.

—The law requires a person to report the theft of his or her pistol to the police.

—A concealed-pistol license is generally required for transporting a pistol in the passenger compartment of a motor vehicle.

—When storing a pistol, for safety reasons the ammunition should be stored separately from the pistol.

—The law requires that when presenting a pistol for a safety inspection it shall be unloaded and encased or equipped with a trigger-locking mechanism.

—When storing a pistol, it should be unloaded and placed in a safe place out of the reach of children.

TEST

1. You should treat every pistol as if it were loaded. *(True/False)*

2. You should always keep the barrel of a pistol pointed in a safe direction. *(True/False)*

3. You should never put your finger on the trigger until you are ready to fire at a proper target. *(True/False)*

4. On a semi-automatic pistol, you should keep the safety on and/or the action open unless firing. *(True/False)*

5. It is illegal to loan a pistol to another person. *(True/False)*

6. The law requires a person to report the theft of his or her pistol to the police. *(True/False)*

7. A concealed-pistol license is generally required for transporting a pistol in the passenger compartment of a motor vehicle. *(True/False)*

8. When storing a pistol, for safety reasons the ammunition should be stored separately from the pistol. *(True/False)*

9. The law requires that when presenting a pistol for a safety inspection it shall be unloaded and encased or equipped with a trigger-locking mechanism. *(True/False)*

10. When storing a pistol, it should be unloaded and placed in a safe place out of the reach of children. *(True/False)*

[Letter to the Editor]

IF HE'D ONLY HAD AN UZI

From a letter to the editor by Larry Pratt in the March 26 Washington Post. *Pratt is executive director of Gun Owners of America, a lobbying organization based in Springfield, Virginia, with a national membership of 100,000.*

The gun-control lobby may laugh when its opponents point to China and the Baltics as examples of how government officials can oppress unarmed citizens. They say that it could never happen here. But the brutal beating of a defenseless black man by L.A. police is evidence that it *can* happen here. It is perhaps no coincidence that Chief Daryl Gates is a proponent of gun control, and yet his police department is a leader in brutality and corruption.

When the police have all the guns, brutal attacks against defenseless citizens will become as common here as in other oppressive regimes. This is why gun owners oppose the banning of so-called assault rifles. If these rifles are banned, the government will begin attaining a greater monopoly of force—and that is the most dangerous kind of monopoly there is.



This photograph by Len Jenshel was taken on U.S. Route 127, near Death Valley National Monument in California. Jenshel's work will be included in The American Scene, *a group show at San Francisco's Rena Bransten Gallery, through July 6.*

[Essay]

INACCESSIBLE EVENTS

From "Modern Times," by Lawrence Weschler, in the Spring 1991 issue of The Threepenny Review, *a quarterly published in Berkeley, California. Weschler is a staff writer at* The New Yorker.

The war's over now—that brief ferocious spasm—but my mind keeps going back to that first morning in January, just after the launching of Desert Storm. A group of us at my office were talking about this awesome new thing that had entered the world, these awesome new things: this unprecedented kind of warfare, with its precision, pinpoint aerial bombing; this unprecedented kind of war in which, thanks to the various satellite technologies, you got to see and hear the results of that bombing instantaneously, as it was happening—or so it seemed anyway that first night, all the networks feverishly aglow with those unforgettable live images of the Baghdad night sky. Modern, we said, high-tech, uncanny, eerie, *futuristic*. And yet, of course, on another level, there was nothing new here. On the ground the carnage of war, the gore, the frantically desperate attempts at rescue, the bitterly expiring hopes—these were all the same as they'd ever been.

One of my friends there at the office that day commented on the way he'd been haunted all morning by the memory of an article he'd read last year—he couldn't remember where—about the San Francisco earthquake. About this young couple who'd been buried alive together in a small room in their collapsed apartment, their bones crushed in debris up to their waists, the two of them huddled together in this narrow air pocket. And of how the rescuers finally got to them—but at that very moment the wreckage caught fire; they were able to free up the husband, but he was forced to leave his wife behind and she perished in the flames.

We were all silent for a moment. CNN in the background was crosscutting between the latest Pentagon briefing and live coverage of a speech by the Turkish prime minister in Ankara.

"Wait a second," my friend said. "I remember: It was in the *Whole Earth Review*. In fact, I bet we can access it over Nexis." Our office is tied into one of those computerized databases that offer access to the complete back contents, continuously updated, of hundreds of

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newspapers and periodicals. My friend set himself down in front of the system's console, booted up the machine, punched in a few key words—"earthquake" and "fire" and "rescue" and "couple"—and instantaneously that very article appeared on the screen. He punched a few more buttons, and the console's neighboring printer revved up and began spewing out a copy. The whole process didn't take more than a few moments.

The account, by Stewart Brand, was every bit as compelling as our colleague had remembered it. It turned out that Brand himself had happened to be visiting the neighborhood at the moment the earthquake struck and that he'd played an impromptu part in the volunteer rescue attempt: He'd been one of those on the outside, scrambling through the wreckage. "Of course it wasn't as direct and purposeful as this brief account makes it seem," he records. "A real rescue is dreamy and hesitant, full of false starts and conflicting ideas, at times frantic and focused, at times diffuse. It is a self-organizing process, neither quick nor tidy . . ." Much later, weeks after the disaster, he'd gone back and interviewed several of the principals from that evening's incident, including Bill Ray, the husband, who was still recovering at a hospital. In his article Brand interwove their stories, and his account climaxed as the firemen were being driven back by the flames:

> "I told Janet," [this is Ray talking] " 'I'm going to get free, and we're both going to get free.' I assumed that I was binding her and that if I could get loose, then she could get loose. You just start pulling with everything you've got. You reach up and you pull on the lath and plaster and it's breaking off in your hand. . . . My wife was screaming because it was a lot of pain and her arms were trapped, and a picture frame of glass was cutting her.
>
> "Then I got free, but she still wasn't. I tried to pull her out. Smoke was coming in. You could hear the flames cracking and popping. She couldn't pull herself loose, and I couldn't get to her."
>
> What they said to each other then Bill Ray prefers to keep private. "Then I left," [Ray recalls]. "I crawled out of that hole . . ."

And so forth. That terrible lacuna—the private moment, what they possibly could have said to each other—has haunted me, too, ever since I read it. And, of course, during the war hundreds of variations of that scene were played out half a globe away. More than once I envisioned seventeen-year-old boys scrambling desperately to rescue their buddies, having to abandon the attempt in the face of further bombardments, and the image was in no way softened by the allegedly mitigating circumstance that the boys in question may have been wearing uniforms.

But, strangely, the image that has really been haunting me, and the one I just can't shake, is that of my colleague in the eerie glow of his Nexis console, calmly punching that set of keys, activating the machine—the machine

[Letter]

CONTROLLED BURN

From a letter regarding "Media Policy on War Issues" sent on January 25 by John Belluardo, a Department of Energy public-information officer, to public-affairs officials at scientific laboratories under contract to the DOE. The directive was issued shortly after Carl Sagan and other scientists made statements warning that Iraq could do serious environmental damage by lighting oil-well fires in Kuwait, which Saddam Hussein had threatened in September to do if attacked. Currently, Kuwaiti oil fires are consuming 6 million barrels a day, an amount equal to 10 percent of the world's daily oil consumption. According to Belluardo, the directive, which remained in effect until March 22, three weeks after the cease-fire was declared, originated in the White House. The White House has denied any knowledge of the order. Belluardo's letter appeared in an article by John Horgan in the May issue of Scientific American.

DOE Headquarters Public Affairs has requested that all DOE facilities and contractors immediately *discontinue* any further discussion of war-related research and issues with the media until further notice.

What we are authorized to say about the environmental impacts of fires/oil spills in the Middle East follows:

Environmental Consequences of War

—Most independent studies and experts suggest that the catastrophic predictions in some recent news reports are exaggerated.
—We are currently reviewing the matter, but these predictions remain speculative and do not warrant further comment at this time.

If asked about the Sandia Lab Report [whose contents and topic remain classified]:

—The Sandia Lab Report is an internal report; we are currently reviewing it.

silently humming away, surveying the veritable continents of information before it, instantaneously targeting its quarry, yanking it out of the endless field, and delivering it up to us whole. The surgical precision of the whole process. For a moment that morning my colleague had seemed to me like one of those amazing young officers strapped to his battle station aboard the AWACS control planes circling high above Saudi Arabia—coolly surveying his console, punching in the coordinates, splaying out the information, directing the entire battle.

CNN, Nexis, AWACS—they're all of a piece. And the carnage on the ground was—and will always be—something else entirely, almost infinitely removed.

[Essay]

UNDERRATING RUSSIA

From "The Coming Resurgence of Russia," by Bruce D. Porter, in the Spring issue of The National Interest. *Porter is the Bradley Senior Research Associate of the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University.*

In 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville published the first volume of *Democracy in America,* which concluded with a short, persuasive analysis of why America was fated to become the greatest power in the world. Among the factors Tocqueville cited as the essential ingredients for America's future domination were its immense geographical size, abundant natural resources, vibrant national character, and growing population. The French nobleman then added, almost as a footnote, that one other nation was destined for similar greatness, and for many of the same reasons: Imperial Russia.

At a time when many pundits have already relegated Russia to the rank of a second-class power and regard its decline as final and irreversible, Tocqueville's wise comments about the essential ingredients of state power provide a valuable reminder that these long-term factors ultimately matter more than economic fluctuations, political crises, or near-term shifts in the military balance. When measured by such "objective factors," to purloin a Leninist phrase, the future of the Russian state—as distinct from the larger Soviet empire—does not appear nearly so bleak. In fact, the most likely prognosis for Russia's future is not its retreat from the world scene but its resurgence both as a global power and as a continuing obstacle to Western interests.

Tocqueville's prediction, made more than a decade before *The Communist Manifesto* was published and eighty-two years before the Bolsheviks seized power, does not hinge on the existence of the Soviet state. He did not presuppose the presence of an ideological force that would fuel Russian expansionism, nor did his conclusion require the existence of a Soviet Union or a Warsaw Pact. The U.S.S.R. could evolve into a wholly new system, or even dis-

[Advertisement]

THE WILD WEST BANK



This three-quarter-page advertisement, for a gun shop in suburban Tel Aviv, appeared in the March 27 issue of Ha'aretz, *the Israeli daily newspaper. The phrase at the top of the page has two meanings: "Don't take chances" and "Don't get knifed." The text at the bottom of the page reads, in part, "These days, in order to be safe, you've got to carry a pistol." In March, after five Israelis were stabbed to death by Palestinians, Israeli police minister Roni Milo said in a statement to the press, "If any Israeli, whether a policeman or not, sees someone with a knife trying to kill, he should shoot. If in the past there were doubts or fears [about shooting to kill], they have no place today."*

solve into its constituent parts, without affecting the validity of Tocqueville's observation. For regardless of what happens to the Soviet Union, Russia will remain and—because it possesses those essential ingredients—will continue to carry great weight in world affairs.

This point was recently acknowledged by another Frenchman, then Minister of Defense Jean-Pierre Chevènement, in a memorandum to senior military officers. "Russia does not need to be an empire to be the strongest military power in Europe," he wrote. "The Russian population is more than 150 million, which is easily the largest population on the continent. Russia's territory is thirty times as large as the next largest country in Europe, which is France." Though Chevènement's views go against the grain of strategic thinking elsewhere in Western Europe, where Soviet power is now largely discounted, they echo the thinking of his great fellow countryman.

One of Gorbachev's unheralded accomplishments has been a sharp rise in the casualty rate of Western predictions about Russia's future. But at least one forecast is quite safe: By the turn of the century, Moscow will still be the seat of some kind of government. That government—whether communist, democratic, fascist, nationalist, or autocratic—will control at least the current territory of the Russian Republic (three fourths of present Soviet territory) and probably the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Kazakhstan as well. If it succeeds in holding together this "Slavic core," it will have inherited nearly 92 percent of the territory and over 80 percent of the population of today's Soviet Union. It will also be in possession of most of the U.S.S.R.'s current military capacity, including the biggest, best-equipped army in Europe and the largest nuclear arsenal in the world.

Clausewitz observed that it is human nature to exaggerate the strength of an opponent. Certainly that tendency prevailed throughout most of the Cold War and especially in the early 1980s, when concern about "the window of vulnerability" and the shifting military balance precipitated the largest peacetime arms buildup in American history. Evidence of an economic crisis in the U.S.S.R. was mounting in the late Brezhnev years, but the signposts were largely discounted in the West.

Today, we have gone to the opposite extreme and now greatly underestimate the potential strength of the Soviet Union. That the Soviet economy is in very bad shape is beyond dispute. But the picture of utter disaster that is now routinely drawn is exaggerated. *Glasnost*, the need to make the case for reform, and the wish to attract Western aid all combine to produce horror stories disproportionate to the actual decline. The inordinate publicity given to Soviet food shortages is a case in point. Such shortages are a perennial fact of Soviet life, but, despite the much freer access they now enjoy, Western diplomats and journalists have been unable to find any evidence of starvation or severe deprivation in Gorbachev's Soviet Union. The fact that the 1990 grain harvest was the largest in Soviet history demonstrates that much of the trouble stems from the deterioration of the Soviet transport system, a problem that could be remedied by targeted investment.

Moscow also has certain substantial economic assets that make it absurd to treat the country as one of the world's out-and-out basket cases, and make the outpouring of official and charitable food aid from the West—and even from India!—seem strange. These assets include massive diamond and gold reserves, the latter alone estimated by the CIA at around $34 billion. Combined with a relatively low level of hard-currency debt (some $54 billion), these assets give Moscow considerable borrowing potential in international credit markets. Furthermore, the U.S.S.R. has the world's largest natural gas reserves and produces nearly as much crude oil as the United States and Saudi Arabia combined.

It is also important to stress that the Soviet leadership need not achieve a Western-style consumer cornucopia in order for economic recovery to take place. The Soviet Union has always had two substantially separate economies—the consumer and the military-industrial. The latter is in much better shape than the former, enjoying first claim on both human and material resources. The number of Soviet-produced luxury sedans, VCRs, and upscale fashions is no measure of prowess in the military arena. The U.S.S.R. only needs to improve its consumer economy enough to maintain the modicum of public support necessary for internal stability.

Although the proposition that Russia will remain a great power ought to be a truism, it receives scant recognition in the current strategic debate in the West. But I will go even further: By the year 2000 we are likely to witness a significant resurgence of Russian military power in both relative and actual terms. For the regime that governs Russia at the turn of the century will not merely inherit the existing Soviet military establishment; it will build on that foundation to ensure Russia's place as the predominant power in Europe and as the military equal of the United States.

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When you come over, he's pleased to see you, and not just because you've brought his daughter. He's interested in your work, your garden, even your opinion. He shows you his latest project and solicits your advice (although he ignores it later).

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So the next time you visit, make the right impression by employing the Golden Rule. Along with his daughter, bring him a bottle of Ballantine's Finest.

When you touch glasses, murmuring an appreciative toast, savor the moment contemplating the woman whose life you share. Then lift the golden spirit and drink in the smooth, mellow flavor with a hint of peat and a breath of smoke.

You'll both be glad that you married into the clan.

Ballantine's.
THE TRUE TASTE OF SCOTCH

How to Choose A Scotch to Impress Your Taste Buds.

In the homes, pubs and hotel bars of Scotland there is a time-honored ritual, handed down from father to son, for the enjoyment of Scotch whisky. It involves clean glasses, moderate amounts of the amber nectar, and a penchant for spirited conversation. The latter being just as essential as either of the former. Once the drinks are poured and pleasantries exchanged, the typical debate begins.

Ballantine's Finest: Good taste installed and maintained.

One rather opinionated participant firmly maintains that the best single malt Scotch whisky comes from the Highlands. Another is adamant in support of the Orkney Island whiskies from the far north. For another, nothing but a softer, sweeter Lowland malt will do, while a staunch advocate of the bold, peaty flavor of Islay insists on being heard. Being Scots, each remains convinced that his opinion is correct, in perpetuity. Of course, when all is said and done, many prefer a blended Scotch like Ballantine's Finest. Because Ballantine's blends 42 of the top single malts from all over Scotland, the taste of the Finest tends to resolve disputes in a most diplomatic manner.

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But how is the well-intentioned American, who is not born in a land of peat and heather, to form an opinion about Scotch? A good place to start is right in your own home. First, free yourself from distractions. Now pour a healthy shot of Ballantine's and let your senses take over.

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Swirl it around, feeling the heft of the glass as the golden liquid shifts from side to side. Notice the malty aroma, and a fragrance reminiscent of vanilla. It's interesting to note that 90% of your sense of taste is centered not in the tongue or mouth, but in the nose. In fact, Ballantine's blenders, the legendary men who create and preserve the Finest, test hundreds of single malts and blends on a daily basis. And they do it with their noses.

Now add a little water and hold it up to the light. It's a beautiful sight as the clear water and golden Scotch mingle together in a shimmering waltz of higher chemistry. Your anticipation builds. Lift the glass and take a sip.

The first thing you may notice is a cool, slightly sweet taste. Let the smooth liquid float on your tongue for a moment before swallowing. Then a mellow whiff of peat makes its presence known, and finally, a soft brush of smoke in the finish. It's as if all the virtues of all the wonderful, diverse, eccentric Scotch whiskies landed in your glass at once.

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Ballantine's.
THE TRUE TASTE OF SCOTCH

good news is that a future resurgence of ... in power does not automatically imply a return to the stark Russian-American rivalry of the Cold War. Marxism-Leninism is so thoroughly discredited that any future Russian government will almost certainly be less ideologically driven than past Soviet regimes, even if it retains a theoretical commitment to an undefined "socialism." Russia's relations with the West, though still adversarial, are likely to be characterized by greater realism and calmer rhetoric than during the Cold War. We are already witnessing this effect in many regions of the Third World, including, most dramatically, the Persian Gulf.

The bad news is that Marxist-Leninist ideology will be replaced by Russian nationalism. For over half a century, the Western world has regarded ideological regimes, both fascist and communist, as the ultimate threat to peace. We have tended to forget that from the French Revolution to World War I, nationalism was the principal source of conflict among nations. Certainly nationalism is on the rise throughout the U.S.S.R., in Russia as much as in the non-Russian republics. It suggests a future relationship between Russia and the West resembling that which prevailed between Imperial Germany and the rest of Europe for several decades after 1870. In short, while the Cold War will be over, the necessity of maintaining a balance of power will remain.

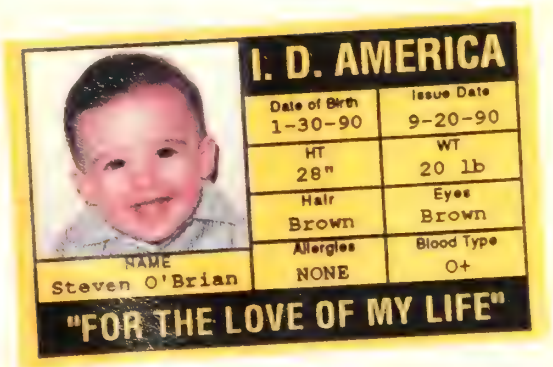
In 1716 General-Admiral Apraxin, an enthusiastic supporter of Peter the Great, sent a letter to the czar's personal secretary in which he confided deep foreboding about Russia's future: "Verily, in all affairs we wander like blind men, not knowing what to do; everywhere there is great agitation, we do not know to whom to turn, or what to do about it for the future; there is no money anywhere, and everything will come to a stop."

In fact, everything did not come to a stop. Peter's reforms, though painful, laid the foundation for Russia's emergence as a great power. For centuries, visitors to Russia have seen the squalor of its people and concluded that the Russian state was near collapse, its military power an illusion. Yet despite deprivation, revolution, and war, Russia has advanced militarily.

Within the next five to ten years, Russia will resolve many of the internal contradictions now plaguing it, and the world will witness the resurgence of its military and industrial power; neither a new government nor a breakup of the Soviet federation will necessarily alter this outcome. When this resurgence occurs, we will look back with chagrin at today's casual assumptions about Russian decline. As Winston Churchill said in 1942: "Everybody has always underrated the Russians."

[I.D. Card]

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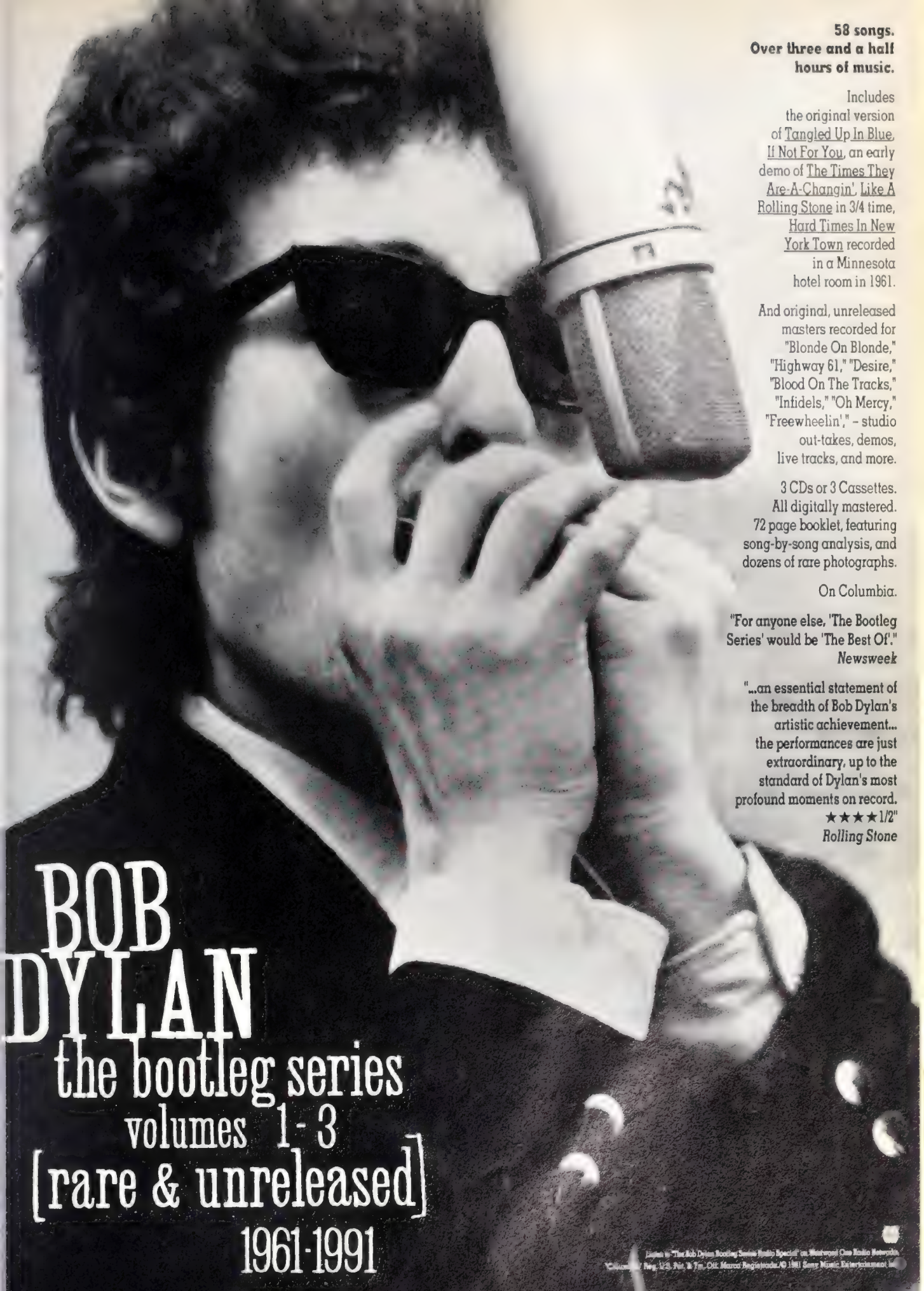
This I.D. card was created by Lee J. Sutherland, a Phoenix father of four, to help parents "react positively and swiftly in assisting the search for your missing loved one." For $..., parents can purchase a kit that allows them to produce two cards: one to be kept at home (so parents can give authorities an accurate description of an abducted child) and the other to be kept with the child at all times.

[Article]

FAINTING ON THE FARM

From "Possibilities of Why Fainting Goats Change Their Fainting Habits," by Mary Runkle, in the Fall 1990 issue of the American Tennessee Fainting Goat Association (ATFGA) newsletter. The association, based in Elkton, Maryland, has 200 members, most of whom raise Tennessee fainting goats. The specially bred animals, also known as "nervous goats," are prized by collectors for their myatonia, a genetic disorder that causes them, when frightened, to freeze in a stiff position and often fall over. Runkle raises her goats in Bloomfield, Iowa.

The first day on the farm for my fainters was May 13, 1990. All six wandered around the lot in a tight knot, like a swarm of gnats. They didn't appear particularly apprehensive, just watchful, and they kept their distance. I



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thought that, since they were in new surroundings with many strange sights, sounds, and smells, they would be laid out across the lot. But instead, they only walked stiffly. I was disappointed. I wanted to see my first goat faint!

Then my husband, Don, came out to tell me that he was going into town. He hooked his fingers through the links of the tall fence and began to call to me. When the goats startled, he put a little extra into his shout to see what would happen. Two went down as if they had been *shot!*

The eight-month-old buck, Cassidy, and Surprise, the non-registered, four-month-old doe kid, unnamed until that moment, were struggling to get up. Mindy, an eighteen-month-old doe, had gone rigid and couldn't move, but she didn't fall over. Since then, these three goats have fainted the most.

One day, only three-month-old Harold hit the ground while all the others ran off. He was pathetic, bleating baby bleats as he tried to get up. After that, Harold fainted several times, sometimes without apparent reason.

That left Daisey, a fifteen-month-old doe, and Willow, an eighteen-month-old doe, as the two I'd yet to see faint. Willow would rush to the gate and stand on her hind legs to get grain from my bucket. Super-tame as she was, I didn't expect to see her faint. Daisey, too, was as limber as a rag. Then, after I'd had them for six weeks, Willow and Daisey started fainting simultaneously. One day I was walking along the outside of the goat-lot fence, the way I did nearly every day, and Daisey went so stiff she would have fallen over had she not been leaning on a hog hut. The cause: I was wearing yellow slacks that she had never seen before.

In summary: Cassidy still faints easily and is my most consistent fainter. Mindy is a very stiff fainter. She's clever at bracing herself against fences or buildings and at spreading her legs to stay upright. Harold seldom falls these days. He's older and wiser. He's learned Mindy's defensive technique to avoid toppling. Willow, the limber pet, trusts me, but she is getting stiffer these days and falls over more too. She is a mystery. Daisey is improving her fainting act. Currently, she falls over more than she goes stiff.

I can never predict which goat will fall or even if one will fall at all. What causes one to drop one time may not affect the same animal another time. They never faint just to please someone. I am always so excited when my fainters faint, and then I feel so guilty the next instant if I've done anything to cause it.

[Essay]

FATHERS, SONS, SPORTS

From "Reasons of the Body," by Scott Russell Sanders, in the Winter 1990 issue of The Georgia Review. *Sanders's memoir "Under the Influence: Paying the Price of My Father's Booze" appeared in the November 1989 issue of* Harper's Magazine; *both essays will appear in* Secrets of the Universe, *to be published this fall by Beacon Press. Sanders teaches at Indiana University in Bloomington.*

The lore of sports may be all that some fathers have to pass down to their sons in place of lore about hunting animals, planting seeds, killing enemies, or placating the gods. Instead of telling him how to shoot a buffalo, the father whispers in the son's ear how to shoot a lay-up. Instead of consulting the stars or the entrails of birds, father and son consult the smudged newspapers to see how their chosen spirits are faring. They fiddle with the dials of radios, hoping to catch the oracular murmur of a distant game. The father recounts heroic deeds, not from the field of battle but from the field of play. The seasons about which he speaks lead not to harvests but to championships. No longer intimate with the wilderness, no longer familiar even with the tamed land of farms, we create artificial landscapes bounded by lines of paint or lime. Within those boundaries, as within the frame of a chessboard or painting, life achieves a memorable, seductive clarity. The lore of sports is a step down from that of nature, perhaps even a tragic step, but it is lore nonetheless, with its own demigods and demons, magic and myths.

The sporting legends I carry from my father are private rather than public. I am haunted by scenes that no journalist recorded, no camera filmed. Father is playing a solo round of golf, for example, early one morning in April. The fairways glisten with dew. Crows rasp and fluster in the pines that border the course. Father lofts a shot toward a par-three hole, and the white ball arcs over the pond, over the sand trap, over the shaggy apron of grass, onto the green, where it bounces, settles down, then rolls toward the flag, rolls unerringly, inevitably, until it falls with a scarcely audible click into the hole. The only eyes within sight besides his own are the crows'. For once, the ball has obeyed him perfectly, harmonizing wind and gravity and the revolution of the spheres; one shot has gone where all are meant

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From Fathers and Sons, *an exhibition of photographs by Susan Unterberg held last fall at the Laurence Miller Gallery in New York City.*

to go, and there is nobody else to watch. He stands on the tee, gazing at the distant hole, knowing what he has done and that he will never do it again.

Here is another story I live by: The man who will become my father is twenty-two, a catcher for a bush-league baseball team in Tennessee. He will never make it to the majors, but on weekends he earns a few dollars for squatting behind the plate and nailing runners foolish enough to try stealing second base. From all those bus rides, all those red-dirt diamonds, the event he will describe for his son with deepest emotion is an exhibition game. Father's team of whites, most of them fresh from two-mule farms, is playing a touring black team, a rare event for that day and place. To make it even rarer, and the sides fairer, the managers agree to mix the teams. And so my father, son of a Mississippi cotton farmer, bruised with racial notions that will take a lifetime to heal, crouches behind the plate and for nine innings catches fastballs and curves, change-ups and screwballs from a whirling, muttering wizard of the Negro Baseball League, one Leroy Robert Paige, known to the world as Satchel. Afterward, Satchel Paige tells the farm boy, "You catch a good game," and the farm boy answers, "You've got the stuff, mister." And for the rest of my father's life, this man's pitching serves as a measure of mastery.

And here is the third myth I carry: One evening when the boy who will become my father is eighteen, he walks into the Black Cat Saloon in Tupelo, Mississippi. He is looking for a fight. Weary of plowing, sick of red dirt, baffled by his own turbulent energy, he often picks fights. This evening the man he picks on is a stranger who occupies a nearby stool at the bar, a husky man in his thirties, wearing a snap-brim hat, dark suit with wide lapels, narrow tie, and infuriatingly white shirt. The stranger is slow to anger. The redheaded Sanders boy keeps at him, keeps at him, mocking the Yankee accent, the hat worn indoors, the monkey suit, the starched shirt, until at last the man stands up and backs away from the bar, fists raised. The Sanders boy lands three punches, he remembers that much, but the next thing he remembers is waking up on the sidewalk, the stranger bending over him to ask if he is all right and to ask, besides, if he would like a boxing scholarship to Mississippi State. The man is headed there to become the new coach. The boy who will become my father goes to Mississippi State for two years, loses some bouts and wins more, then quits to pursue a Golden Gloves title, and when he fails at that he keeps on fighting in bars and on streets, and at last he quits boxing, his nose broken so many times there is no bone left in it, only a bulb of flesh which a boy sitting in his lap will later squeeze and mash like dough. From all those bouts, the one he will describe

to his son with the greatest passion is that brawl at the Black Cat Saloon, when the stranger in the white shirt, a good judge of fighters, found him worthy.

Why do we play these games so avidly? All sports, viewed dispassionately, are dumb. The rules are arbitary, the behaviors absurd. For boxing and running, perhaps, you could figure out evolutionary advantages. But what earthly use is it to become expert at swatting a ball with a length of wood or at lugging an inflated pigskin through a mob? Freudians might say that in playing with balls we men are simply toying with the prize portion of our anatomy. Darwinians might claim that we are competing for the attention of females, like so many preening peacocks or head-butting rams. Physicians might attribute the sporting frenzy to testosterone, economists point to our dreams of professional paychecks, feminists to our machismo, philosophers to our fear of death.

No doubt all of those explanations, like buckets put out in the rain, catch some of the truth. But none of them catches all of the truth. None of them explains, for example, what moves a boy to bang a rubber ball against a wall for hours, for entire summers, as my father did in his youth, as I did in mine, as Jesse, my son, still does. That boy, throwing and catching in the lee of garage or barn, dwells for a time wholly in his body, and that is reward enough. He aims a ball at a knothole, at a crack, then leaps to snag the rebound, mastering a skill, working himself into a trance. How different is his rapture from the dancing and drumming of a young brave? How different is his solitude from that of any boy seeking visions?

The less use we have for our bodies, the more we need reminding that the body possesses its own way of knowing. To steal a line from Pascal: The body has reason that reason knows nothing of. Although we struggle lifelong to dwell in the flesh without rancor, without division between act and desire, we succeed only for moments at a time. We treasure whatever brings us those moments, whether it be playing cello or playing pool, making love or making baskets, kneading bread or nursing a baby or kicking a ball. Whoever teaches us an art or skill, whoever shows us a path to momentary wholeness, deserves our love.

I am conscious of my father's example whenever I teach a game to my son. Demonstrating a stroke in tennis or golf, I amplify my gestures, like a ham actor playing to the balcony. My pleasure in the part is increased by the knowledge that others, and especially my father, have played it before me. What I know about hitting a curve or shooting a hook shot or throwing a left jab, I know less by words than by feel. When I take Jesse's hand and curl his fingers over the baseball's red stitches, explaining how to make it deviously spin, I feel my father's hands slip over mine like gloves. Move like so, like so. I feel the same ghostly guidance when I hammer nails or fix a faucet or pluck a banjo. Working on the house or garden or car, I find myself wearing more than my father's hands, find myself clad entirely in his skin.

As Jesse nears thirteen, his estimate of my knowledge and my powers declines rapidly. If I were a potter, say, or a carpenter, my skill would outreach his for decades to come. But where speed and stamina are the essence, a father in his forties will be overtaken by a son in his teens. Training for soccer, Jesse carries a stopwatch as he jogs around the park. I am not training for anything, only knocking rust from my joints and beguiling my heart, but I run along with him, puffing to keep up. I know that his times will keep going down, while I will never run faster than I do now. This is as it should be, for his turn has come. Slow as I am, and doomed to be slower, I relish his company.

I mean to live the present year before rushing off to any future ones. I mean to keep playing games with my son, so long as flesh will permit, as my father played games with me well past his own physical prime. Now that sports have begun to give me lessons in mortality, I realize they have also been giving me, all the while, lessons in immortality. These games, these contests, these grunting conversations of body to body, father to son, are not substitutes for some other way of being alive. They are the sweet and sweaty thing itself.

[Wedding Memo]

PLANNING THAT FABULOUS NIGHT

From a letter sent by a Youngstown, Ohio, bride-to-be to her bridesmaids and ushers in 1976. Since then, copies of the six-page, single-spaced letter have been circulating nationally among engaged and newlywed couples.

Dear Bridal Party:

From time to time I will be dropping everyone a line or two to keep each of you informed about how the wedding plans are progressing so that no one thinks I have forgotten them and no one is in the dark.

smaids: Each bridesmaid will receive [illegible] mail from Priscilla of Boston [illegible] time in January. This will give each of you enough time to have the dress "professionally" altered if need be. The dresses are chiffon "Priscilla" dresses and can be worn after the wedding. The right shoulder is bare and there is no sleeve on the left arm. Each has its own cape, which goes almost to the floor. The two matrons of honor will be in silver and the four bridesmaids in peppermint green. As of this date, I have not decided whether the two in silver will wear green gloves and the four in green silver gloves, but long gloves will be worn. I strongly suggest that each person shops now for the typical cloth "closed-toe" shoe. Keep the heel size reasonable—of course, no platforms of any kind. Anyone having trouble with their legs should wear support hose.

Ushers: Each usher will be dressed identically to the groom, best man, and the head groomsman: black tails. Be sure you have black silk socks and black dress shoes polished to a high shine.

Reception Rehearsal: On Saturday afternoon (early) we will go to Powers Auditorium to practice for the reception that night after the wedding ceremony. Why? Well, there is a long staircase at the auditorium that will be put to full use: Each bridal-party couple will be introduced separately and will proceed down the first half of the staircase (accompanied by music). Upon reaching the platform in the middle of the stairs, the girl will be required to "swirl" from the right side of the steps and move to the left side, and her partner (an usher) will move to the right; then they will proceed down the second half of the stairs and take their positions for the Bridal Dance.

Dancing: I will try to find a choreographer to help with the Bridal Dance—but each person can *please* do his or her part by learning to waltz correctly in three-quarter time. Now, when I say waltz, I do not in any way mean two steps here and two steps there, always standing in one spot. When we waltz it will be to "Tales of the Vienna Woods." Each usher will be twirling his partner while moving in a large circle and maintaining even spacing between each couple. Turn on some old-time movies and you can see how it is supposed to be done. But, PLEASE, PLEASE, practice now! Suggestion: Go take dancing lessons!! That's what we have to do!!

Also, there will be some polkas, the Charleston, jitterbug, and others. These are not "required" dances. There will not be any up-to-date dances. I personally dislike them and think they look terrible—they simply are not dances, in my estimation.

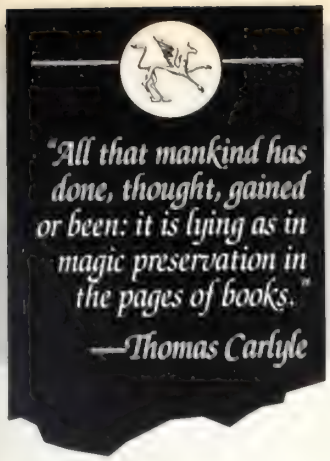
Photographs: There will be plenty. First and foremost, there will be "sound motion pictures" taken throughout the wedding ceremony, during the Bridal Dance, and while each bridal-party couple walks down the steps at the reception. Flash pictures will be taken in the church ONLY until my father and I arrive at the altar—after that there will be NO flash pictures; the official photographer will be taking time exposures. I believe it is the height of ill manners for any guest to leave his or her seat and proceed to the altar to take pictures.

Dress Requirements: Makeup—It is requested that you wear a little more than usual because of the photographs and the movie pictures. Any ladies with short eyelashes are requested to wear either false eyelashes or go to a beauty parlor and have false eyelashes put in one by one. The matrons of honor wearing the silver dresses *must* have a lot of pink in their makeup. That is straight from Priscilla. Be sure that each of the four other bridesmaids has green eyeshadow and that everyone wears blusher, powder, eyebrow pencil, foundation, lipstick, and mascara—the works!! There will be two experts in the field of makeup to help anyone who needs it or wants it. As for the men, ho, ho, you will have your turn also. If you have a shiny face, be sure to use some of your wife's face powder to take the shine away.

For the wives and husbands of those who



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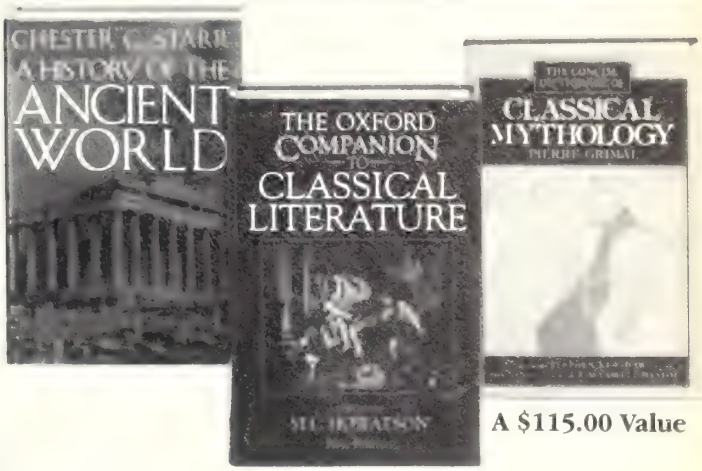
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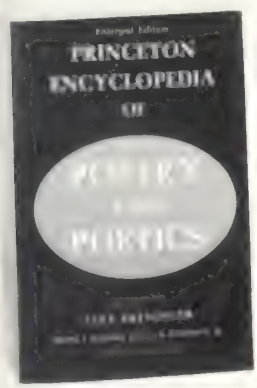
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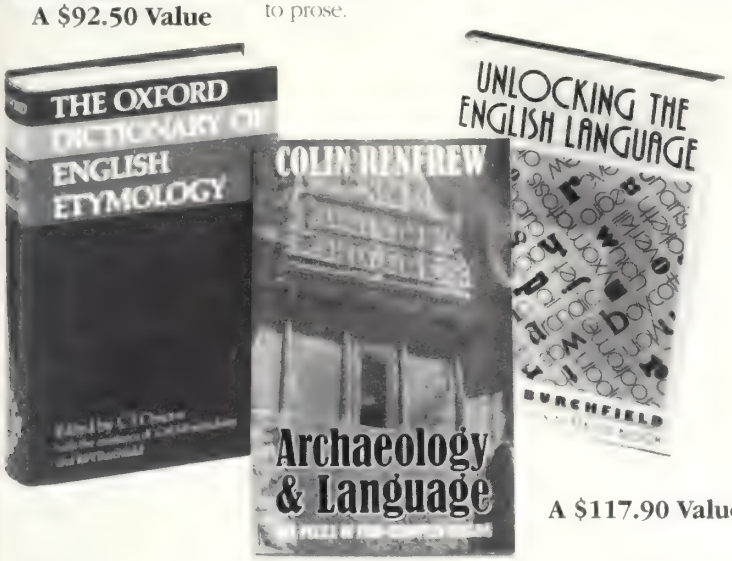


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are in the wedding party:

Ladies—the color of the bridesmaids' dresses has been stated, and all that I ask is that your dress be a color that will not contrast with the peppermint green, that it is of full length, and fairly simple in line. Also, please do not wear an extensive amount of jewelry, as the bridesmaids will possibly wear only small pearl earrings. Be sure each of you has gloves. You need wear nothing in your hair.

Men—Amy Vanderbilt's book on etiquette says that anyone receiving a formal invitation is to wear "black tie," which means tuxedo. Now, this could get rather touchy, so I will put it this way: If you do not wish to wear a tux, or do not wish to take on the expense of renting one, it will be perfectly fine to wear a "black" suit, white shirt with French cuffs, black silk socks, black shoes, and a black-and-silver tie. I hope this doesn't inconvenience too many, but I would hate to look at color pictures of the head table and see some men in black tails and others in brown or blue suits!!

Children at the Wedding or Reception: It is my wish, and also Z.'s [the fiancé], that there be no children at the wedding ceremony or at the reception. For purposes of clarification, a child is anyone eighteen years or younger. There are many reasons for this request, but the best is the simple fact that I don't have the money to invite children who only pick at their food, cry, run around, etc. One friend of mine, who married about a year ago, says that when she got her wedding pictures back, there wasn't one that didn't have a kid in it and she was disgusted. Don't get me wrong, children are great. But there is a time and a place for them and this isn't it. This is an adult, ultra-formal affair and I want to keep it that way.

One point of etiquette: When a formal invitation is sent out with Mr. and Mrs. Paul J. Smith on the outside envelope and Mr. and Mrs. Smith on the inside envelope, that is exactly what it means—only Mr. and Mrs. Smith are being invited and no one else; no others in the family, no guests who might be visiting at the time, etc. If asked about guests, you can "diplomatically" pass this on.

I know it sounds like I am being a real fusspot, but I would hate to tell each of you what the cost is per person just for the reception alone. I'm doing this for my friends and relatives, for all of us to have a good time, but since there are only so many hours in the day, and I already have three jobs, and I am not a Vanderbilt, some lines must be drawn, and I hope everyone understands.

I've never wanted a small country-type wedding—Z. says this is no wedding but rather a coronation!! Well, not quite. But it sure has been fun so far, and I just cannot wait for everyone to arrive and for all our friends and relatives to have one great, fabulous night. Everyone think positive and keep your fingers crossed. Pray—that will bring more help.

Won't each of you come with Z. and me to fantasyland—a place where dreams come true and fun abounds for everyone? Where the bride is Cinderella and the groom is Cinderfella for an evening. You are going to attend a ball at "Buckingham Palace" (pretend) and the King and Queen have invited only "royalty"—YOU! This will be a time to remember when you were courting the person to whom you are now married—a time to take a second

[Domestic Partnership Announcement]

A NEW "I DO"



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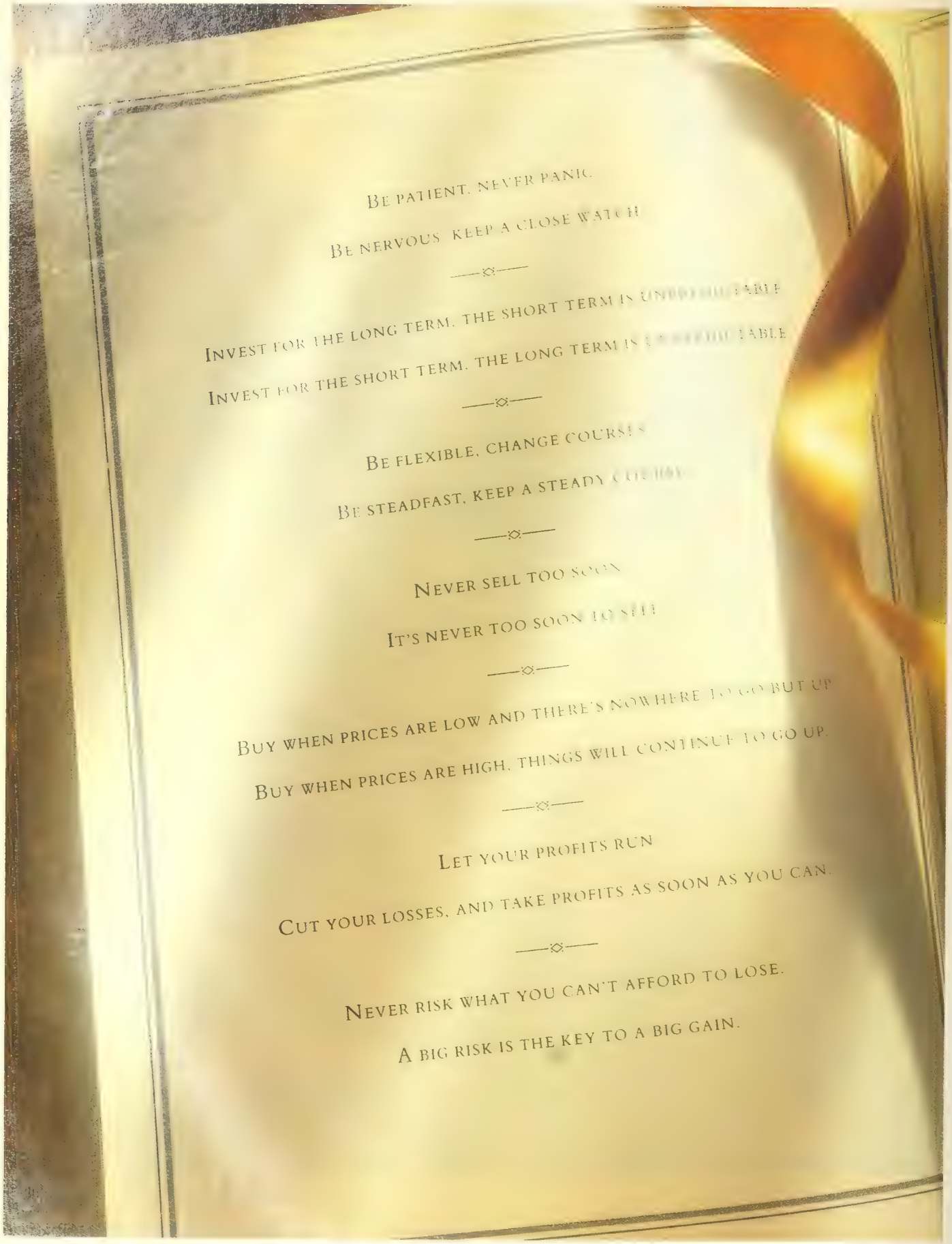
Ann M. Monson and Marie A. Hanson joyfully celebrated their loving and committed relationship of 13 years by officially registering their domestic partnership on February 19, 1991, with the Minneapolis City Clerk's office. The event was attended by friends and loved ones followed by a congratulatory breakfast at Ruby's Cafe.

The announcement above, which appeared in the March 21 Minneapolis Star Tribune, *marked the debut of the paper's Domestic Partners column. The column, which is the first of its kind to appear in a metropolitan newspaper, was instituted after the city of Minneapolis passed legislation allowing same-sex couples to register their partnerships at City Hall.*



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May your every dream come true!

Love,

X

[Fiction]

THE ULTIMATE TATTOO

From Steroids Made My Friend Jorge Kill His Speech Therapist: An ABC Afterschool Special, *a novel by Mark Leyner, to be published next year by Harmony Books. Leyner read this selection at Cooper Union in New York City in April. An excerpt from* My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist, *Leyner's first novel, appeared in the July 1990 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

My insignia is a guy surfing on an enormous wave of lava—it's an avalanche of this lurid molten spume with this glowering chiseled commando in baggy polka-dotted trunks on an iridescent board careering across the precipice of this incredible fuming tsunami of lava—and there's an erupting volcano in the distance in the upper right-hand corner. It's excellent.

I have it tattooed on my heart. And I don't mean on the skin of my chest over my heart. I mean tattooed on the organ itself. It's illegal in the States—I had to go to Mexico. It's called visceral tattooing. They have to open you up. They use an ink that contains a radioactive isotope so that the tattoo shows up on X rays and CAT scans.

Do you want to get sick to your stomach? I'll describe the fetid, vermin-infested office of the "physician" who did my first visceral tattoo: Dr. José Fleischman. I went to sit down on what I thought was a couch in his waiting room—but it wasn't a couch. It was thousands—tens of thousands—of cockroaches that had gathered in a mass that was the shape of a couch. The same thing happened with what I thought was a magazine. I reached for what I thought was the latest issue of *Sports Illustrated* and it moved. It wasn't a magazine at all, but a rectangular swarm of centipedes with a cluster of silverfish lying near the upper edge, and I guess from a distance, and in the dim light, the silverfish against the dark background of centipedes looked as if they formed the words "Sports Illustrated." There was no receptionist and there were no other clients.

Finally, Fleischman emerged from the back room. The lenses of his eyeglasses were the thickest I'd ever seen. They actually bulged several inches out from the frames. It was as if he were wearing two of those snow-filled glass paperweights on his face. His clothes were soaked through with sweat. I explained that I wanted a surfer on a wave of molten lava tattooed on my heart and I handed him a color Xerox of my insignia. He lit a cigarette and studied the rendering from various angles, holding his head askew and squinting through the smoke.

"My friend," he said, speaking for the first time, "what chamber?"

"Chamber?" I asked.

He pointed with his cigarette to a yellowing diagram on the wall.

"The two atria are thin-walled. The ventricles are thick-walled. I recommend the ventricles. Either one—it's your call, amigo."

I scrutinized the diagram for a few seconds. "The left ventricle," I announced.

"Bueno," said Fleischman. "Today, we gonna put you out, open you up, and I'm gonna just do the outlines, then I sew you up. Then in two weeks, we open again, we fill in the colors, and sew up, all finished."

I was still looking over the diagram. "Say, Fleischman, while you got me on the table, could you do 'Mom' on my pulmonary artery?"

"What kind of calligraphy you like? You like somethin' like this?" He showed me an X ray of someone's thyroid gland with the word "Mother" done in what he called "Florentine style"—a very serpentine, filigreed style of lettering.

"That's very nice," I nodded.

Those were my first visceral tattoos. I've had many since. A tip to the guys out there: Visceral tattoos really turn on female medical technicians and nurses. I've had numerous hot relationships start because a med-tech or a nurse saw one of my X rays and went nuts over all the tattoos. They know that any wimp can go out and get "Winona Forever" stenciled on his arm—but it takes real balls to have yourself put under general anesthesia, sliced open, have a vital organ etched with radioactive-isotope ink, and then get sewn up again every time you want to commemorate that special lady.

Next I want to have the words "Desert Storm—Thunder and Lightning" tattooed on my left frontal cortex. But I don't know where I'm going to go for that one. Brain tattooing is illegal even in Mexico. Someone told me maybe Malaysia.

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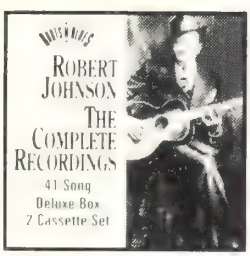
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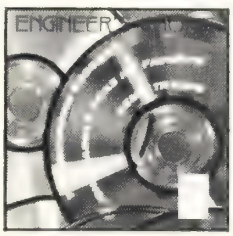
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ELIMINATION DANCE

By Michael Ondaatje. From The Cinnamon Peeler, *a collection of his poems published by Knopf. In a note at the end of the collection, he explains that "Elimination Dance" is "based on those horrendous dances where a caller decides, seemingly randomly, who should not be allowed to continue dancing." Ondaatje lives in Toronto.*

Those who are allergic to the sea

Those who have resisted depravity

Men who shave off their beards in stages, pausing to take photographs

American rock stars who wear Toronto Maple Leaf hockey sweaters

Those who (while visiting a foreign country) have lost the end of a Q-Tip in their ear and have been unable to explain their problem

Gentlemen who have placed a microphone beside a naked woman's stomach after lunch and later, after slowing down the sound considerably, have sold these noises on the open market as whale songs

All actors and poets who spit into the first row while they perform

Men who fear to use an electric lawn mower, feeling they could drowse off and be dragged by it into a swimming pool

Any person who has had the following dream. You are in a subway station of a major city. At the far end you see a coffee machine. You put in two coins. The Holy Grail drops down. Then blood pours into the chalice

Any person who has lost a urine sample in the mail

All those belletrists who feel that should have been "*an* urine sample"

Anyone who has had to step into an elevator with all of the Irish Rovers

Those who have written to the age-old brotherhood of Rosicrucians for a free copy of their book *The Mastery of Life* in order to release their inner consciousness and to experience (in the privacy of their home) momentary flights of the soul

Those who have accidentally stapled themselves

Anyone who has been penetrated by a Mountie

Any university professor who has danced with a life-size cardboard cutout of Jean Genet

Those who have unintentionally locked themselves inside a sleeping bag at a camping-goods store

Any woman whose IUD has set off an alarm system at the airport

Those who, after a swim, find the sensation of water dribbling out of their ears erotic

Men who have never touched a whippet

Women who gave up the accordion because of pinched breasts

Those who have pissed out of the back of a moving truck

Those who have woken to find the wet footprints of a peacock across their kitchen floor

Anyone whose knees have been ruined as a result of performing sexual acts in elevators

Literary critics who have swum the Hellespont

Anyone who has been hired as a "professional beater" and frightened grouse in the direction of the Queen Mother

Any lover who has gone into a flower shop on Valentine's Day and asked for clitoris when he meant clematis

Those who have used the following techniques of seduction:
—small talk at a falconry convention
—entering a spa town disguised as Ford Madox Ford
—making erotic rotations of the pelvis, backstage, during the storm scene of *King Lear*
—underlining suggestive phrases in the prefaces of Joseph Conrad

Anyone who has testified as a character witness for a dog in a court of law

Any writer who has been photographed for the jacket of a book in one of the following poses: sitting in the back of a 1956 Dodge with two roosters; in a tuxedo with the Sydney Opera House in the distance; studying the vanishing point on a jar of Dutch Cleanser; against a gravestone with dramatic backlighting; with a false nose; in the vicinity of Machu Picchu; or sitting in a study and looking intensely at one's own book

The person who borrowed my Martin Beck thriller, read it in a sauna which melted the glue off the spine so the pages drifted to the floor, stapled them together, and returned the book, thinking I wouldn't notice

Those who have come across their own telephone numbers underneath terse insults or compliments in the washroom of the Bay Street Bus Terminal

Anyone with pain. ■

THE PROBLEM WITH BANKS? BANKERS

Bad loans, not bad laws, created the current crisis

By L. J. Davis

Late this past winter, those energies in Washington not summoned to join the Mother of Battles in the sands of Kuwait were directed to the nervous contemplation of a no less uncertain and mine-laden ground: the distinctly queasy landscape of the American banking business. A crisis had begun to roll through the vaults of the nation's 12,806 commercial banks—banks whose main function has traditionally consisted of making large, short-term loans to underwrite business and governmental activities, but whose role had now apparently expanded to include providing bad loans to anyone who could fill out an application. Bad loans to overextended farmers followed by the mid-Eighties collapse of the domestic oil business—which turned numerous wildcatters into deadbeats—had extinguished many smaller commercial banks in the country's heartland, but this was something else. For eleven large banks in the nation's traditional money centers of New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, return on assets in 1990 fell to about 0.3 percent, a grim return even by the banking industry's usual less-than-stimulating standards of profit. And a great many of the nation's commercial banks made no money at all: Last year, one in seven posted a loss.

A newly acquired understanding of the savings and loan scandal—an ongoing and still worsening mess that, as I wrote in these pages last fall, will end up costing American taxpayers an estimated $500 billion—no doubt sharpened the curiosity of official Washington with regard to the health of the nation's commercial banks. (See my report, "Chronicle of a Debacle Foretold: How Deregulation Begat the S&L Scandal," in the September 1990 issue of *Harper's Magazine*.) The creation of this abrupt-

L. J. Davis, a Harper's Magazine *contributing editor, wrote about the S&L scandal in the September 1990 issue. The article was nominated for a National Magazine Award.*

ONE OF THE ODDER LESSONS OF THE DISTINCTLY ODD REAGAN ERA APPEARS TO BE THAT A CERTAIN KIND OF ECONOMIC BOOM IS ABSOLUTELY TERRIBLE FOR THE BANKING BUSINESS

ly raised consciousness could also be traced to the grainy photographs that crowded the front pages of nearly every big-city newspaper during the first days of January, photographs showing bundled, sullen men and women lined up like Moscow shoppers to withdraw their hard-earned monies from the Bank of New England, the thirty-third largest bank in the country before its seizure on the sixth of that month by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

One of the odder lessons of the distinctly odd Reagan era appears to be that a certain kind of economic boom is absolutely terrible for the banking business. The banking crisis did not emerge with the nation's economic downturn that commenced last summer. It just got worse. In the forty-six years that divide 1933—the year federally backed deposit insurance was created, in the wake of the Great Depression's banking crisis—from 1979—the year before an amiable marionette named Ronald Reagan began his march on Washington—558 insured banks failed, an average of slightly more than twelve a year. From 1980 to 1989, however, 1,085 insured banks either failed or were rescued (at no small cost) by the FDIC, an average of 108 a year, and the pace of failure was quickening; 630 of the failures occurred in the recklessly prosperous years 1986–1989. Something had gone very wrong.

The ominous signs emanating from the commercial banking system were, alas, among the numerous warnings of grave national peril that, from January 1981 through December 1988, utterly failed to murder the presidential sleep. It is not clear when Reagan's successor began to ponder the vexed matter of the banking system, but one may plausibly speculate that well before last year's belated emergence of the S&L debacle as a volatile political issue—an issue, perhaps not incidentally, with George Bush's son Neil rather close to its dark heart—the new chief executive suspected that things were not quite as they should be. Indeed, how could he not have known? A man of modest wealth, inherited position, and the finest education that private means can buy—and for years the perennial sidekick of the Republican establishment—Bush counted many friends among the men in subtle pinstripes who occupied spacious corner offices in the handful of large northeastern banks whose very names (Chase Manhattan Bank, Chemical Bank, Citibank, etc.) are the ones people think of when they think of banking at all. (Bush also has many well placed friends in Texas, his adopted home state, where 638 banks have failed since 1988.) Friends in trouble have a way of letting one another know, and the gentlemen in the pinstripes were in very big trouble. They had, it seemed, been making bad loans, frightfully bad ones, and they had been making a lot of them.

In September 1990, drowned out by news of looming war and budget deficits, came word that Chase Manhattan Bank, the nation's third largest, would eliminate 5,000 jobs, slash its dividend by 52 percent (to 30 cents a share), and place $650 million in its reserves to cover possible losses on bad loans—the latter move meaning that Chase could no longer use two thirds of a billion dollars in real money it could have used only the day before. By year's end, under intense pressure from government regulators to rebuild its capital, Chase had sold $9 billion of its assets, reducing its size by 8 percent. Citibank was also in trouble, and also shrinking; it nearly halved its dividend and eliminated 8,000 jobs. And there was more bad news to come. In January of this year, Citi revealed that perhaps $2.5 billion it had loaned to customers in commercial and residential real estate were "non-performing," which meant that the loans either were not being repaid or that there was a strong likelihood that they would not be repaid. It was recalled with a certain bleak irony that as recently as the spring of 1990, which now seemed an age ago, the bank's chairman, John Reed, had confidently predicted that annual earnings at Citi would soon reach a record $5 billion.

In the wake of all this troubling news, R. Dan Brumbaugh Jr., a former deputy chief economist of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, believed he had detected unmistakable signs that a run had begun on the big money-center banks—a silent, not easily perceived run, because (a) the deposit bases of the banks were not actually shrinking all that much; and (b) no one, understandably, has much of an interest in talking about this distressing event, a bank run being the great nightmare of finance capitalism. According to Brumbaugh, and he was not alone, large institutional investors such as pension funds had begun this past winter to withdraw millions of dollars in largely uninsured deposits. Meanwhile, the resulting shortfall was being made up by the brokerage houses and investment banks that assemble so-called brokered deposits: funds invested as deposits for their clients—many of those very same institutional investors—usually packaged in bundles of $100,000 to qualify for federal deposit insurance in the event of a bank failure.

More banks could well fail, and fail dramatically, taxing the already sapped FDIC. This spring the corporation finds itself with little money, and it may very well have none at all in any practical sense of the word. The FDIC estimates its available funds, following the fiasco at the Bank of New England, at $8 billion, or about 42 cents for each $100 of insured deposits. (During banking's age of reason, which ended in, roughly, 1974, people talked of having on hand $1.50 per $100, and almost no one gave the insurance system a second thought.) But the $8 billion figure does not reckon with the corporation's contingent liabilities—real losses that the FDIC has actually recognized and artfully hidden. Finding its template in the desperate actions of the insolvent and now defunct Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, the FDIC handsomely reimburses a sound bank for assuming the creaky outstanding loans, many of them very bad indeed, of a failed bank. Because these dangerous loans, for which the FDIC is ultimately responsible, are carried off the corporation's books, the true magnitude of the insurance fund's exposure to possible losses is concealed. In fact, the unaudited FDIC exposure to such contingent liabilities in 1990 was at least $6.5 billion.

THIS SPRING THE FDIC FINDS ITSELF WITH LITTLE MONEY, AND IT MAY VERY WELL HAVE NONE AT ALL IN ANY PRACTICAL SENSE OF THE WORD



The FDIC, fully aware of the losses it nevertheless keeps well hidden, has turned to other sectors of the government for help. It wants to borrow some $5 billion from the U.S. Treasury to clean up the mess caused by the Bank of New England's failure, and it entertains hopes of obtaining as much as $65 billion more—from the Federal Reserve, the Federal Financing Bank, and the banking industry, as well as the Treasury—before the nationwide crisis is over. In this regard, one should recall that since the establishment of the insurance fund in the 1930s, the cost of dealing with failed banks and paying back insured depositors has been covered solely with monies the FDIC amassed through collecting premiums from banks it insured. (In each of its first fifty-four years, it operated at a pleasing and consistent profit and actually returned $20 billion to the banks as surplus premiums.) One should also regard with healthy skepticism the claim of FDIC chairman L. William Seidman that the banking industry itself (by charging itself increased insurance premiums) will pay off the many billions in loans, or, if that fails, that the necessary funds

Illustrations by Keith Bendis

WHEREVER THE FDIC TURNS FOR MONEY IN THE END, AND THERE WILL LIKELY COME TO BE A BUST OF AN END, THERE IS EVER ONLY ONE SURE SOURCE OF FUNDS: US

will be raised through the sale of the assets of closed banks in the (already glutted) marketplace. Wariness is further recommended when one studies the FDIC's canny appeal to sources other than the Treasury, making it seem as though tax dollars are not at issue, which they are: The Federal Reserve et al. have only the Treasury to turn to should the loans to the FDIC go sour. Wherever the FDIC turns for money in the end, and there will likely come a bust of an end, there is ever only one sure source of funds: us.

The Bush administration would have you think it has devised a plan to prevent such a parlous outcome. The President chose to have his Treasury secretary, Nicholas Brady, not only announce but calmly explain the administration's proposal to reform the banking industry—a proposal the President has called nothing less than his chief domestic legislative priority for 1991—early in February, when the smoke of Middle Eastern battle was at its thickest. The result, perhaps unintended, was that its specifics have been less firmly grasped than the plan's contemporary-sounding goal: getting the banks and the banking laws up to speed by making them conform to "the reality of the marketplace." The marketplace emphasized by Brady is the international one, where only one U.S. bank—Citibank—ranks among the world's top thirty, most of which are now Japanese. As recently as 1970, Brady reminded assembled reporters, "We had nine banks" in the top thirty. And so, with a bold and single stroke, it was miraculously revealed by the administration that the problem with banks was not a matter involving billions of dollars in terrible loans made by too-easily-duped bankers. The problem was simply one of "modernizing" the banking system for the international marketplace, a problem to be solved—as might be expected from the Bush administration—through the magic of deregulation.



In fairness, it should be pointed out that there are aspects of the administration's proposal that have little to do with the international marketplace and are eminently sensible. For example, it is a perfectly reasonable and long overdue idea to allow banks to open branches across state lines and buy banks in other states without the archaic legal tangles that now cost the industry billions of unnecessary dollars. Consolidation would no doubt result, with many small banks being folded into fewer, larger banks, but this would actually do much to solve a problem, not create one. Compared with its foreign competitors, the United States is a seriously overbanked country, a source of much strain to examiners. Japan has 18,000 people per bank, France has 63,000, and Britain has 86,000; whereas the comparable figure for the United States is 7,300 citizens per bank. (Citibank, the largest bank in the land, attracts only 1 percent of the nation's depositors.)

The heart of the administration's proposal, however, has nothing to do with rationalizing the system. Between January 1986 and October 1990, the banks charged off *$75 billion* in bad loans. Are bankers to be castigated for this? No way. By a simple exercise in semantics, the bankers have been transformed by the administration into hapless and innocent victims of historical forces beyond their control, of global economic changes, and of the failure of U.S. banking laws to confront the

altered environment. By this reasoning, gullible bankers have not been responsible for losing money held by the banks they run. Banks have been unable to make money because of the governmental constraints placed on the luckless bankers who run them, and the time has come to strike off the shackles and set them free.

Let us pause for a moment and examine the banker. Who is he? He is a man to whom you entrust your money. He keeps it safe in his vault, pays you interest for the privilege, and returns it when you want it, with a smile or a frown, as the occasion demands. To protect your money, pay you interest, and turn a (modest) profit for himself and his stockholders, he is also supposed to invest the funds under his care in carefully chosen, disaster-proof locations, such as Treasury bonds, real-estate deals examined beforehand with microscope and skepticism, gilt-edged foreign loans, and the business ventures of executives as cautious as himself. A banker need not be smart (a persuasive argument can be made that a banker *should not* be smart), but he must be prudent; he must not, under any circumstances, lose the money entrusted to his care.

The money, however, is the problem. A banker is placed in the vicinity of quite a lot of the stuff, the temptations are obvious, and the history of banking, when it is impartially examined, is not encouraging. After the 1929 stock-market crash, the cynical and worldly men of the New Deal decided that enough was enough: Bankers should be given clear rules, instructed to follow them, and punished if they did not. The resulting financial system, after an initial time-out for the remainder of the Depression and a subsequent world war, flourished, and the nation was immeasurably enriched in the process, though the bankers themselves chafed under an enforced prudence that assumed that quantities of cash made them stupid, which it does.

Under the Bush administration's plan, bankers will be allowed to do pretty much what they were happily doing in October 1929. For example, they might sell insurance, if the states in which they are chartered permit it, and several already do. Another of the administration's proposals would allow banks to underwrite corporate securities as investment bankers do, or sell mutual funds like the brokers do. The administration also wants to permit industrial companies to own banks, reasoning that this is how it works in Japan, and Japanese banking is the world's most successful. Unfortunately for this line of reasoning, a number of U.S. industrial companies have already entered the banking business in everything but name, and their success has been mixed at best. (In February Westinghouse Electric wrote off $975 million lost by its financial-services arm in bad real-estate loans, junk bonds, and leveraged buyouts; Unisys, the computer company, plans to sell off much of its finance unit's two-thirds-of-a-billion-dollar investment-debt portfolio, because servicing it has put a strain on the company's cash flow.)

These Bush administration reforms amount to little less than a potentially catastrophic counterrevolution. In the teeth of immediate precedent—the deregulation of the S&Ls and the resulting losses and frauds—the administration would happily undo the safeguards, already somewhat eroded, constructed during the Great Depression to place a wall between banks and commerce. Much of the deposited money lost by bankers during the 1929 crash and the long depression that ensued disappeared as the result of their involvement in high-risk, deceptive, and complex transactions of the kind carried out today by investment banks. To encourage depositors to return their money to the commercial banks—and thereby create the capital, in the form of savings, that a market economy requires for growth—Congress passed the Glass-Stea-

IN THE TEETH OF IMMEDIATE PRECEDENT—THE DEREGULATION OF THE S&LS AND THE RESULTING LOSSES AND FRAUDS—THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAPPILY UNDO SAFEGUARDS IN PLACE SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION

COMMERCIAL BANKERS HAVE LOST BILLIONS IN THE RELATIVELY MORE PREDICTABLE BUSINESS OF LOANING MONIES TO CORPORATIONS, REAL-ESTATE INVESTORS, AND GOVERNMENTS, WHY LET THEM GAMBLE ON RISKIER VENTURES?

gall Act of 1933, which insisted that investment banking and commercial banking were separate businesses and ordained that ne'er the twain should meet again. Implicit in Glass-Steagall is the idea that investment banking and commercial banking are pursued to their differing ends by very different types of bankers. The President's men don't seem to have grasped this rather rudimentary idea, nor do they appear to understand the reasoning behind it. The primary target of the Bush banking plan is the utter destruction of Glass-Steagall.

The only real question to put to the Bush proposal is this: If commercial bankers have lost billions of dollars in the relatively more predictable business of loaning monies to corporations, real-estate investors, and governments, why let them gamble with other people's money on riskier ventures?

To fully understand how bankers have lost the billions they have in the past fifteen years or so, let us begin by harkening back to the mid-Seventies. It was then that a handful of the big commercial banks found themselves suddenly awash in cash from the petroleum sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf. The price of oil had quadrupled; the sheikhs, pondering how to spend their windfall, had parked their new-found fortunes in the banks, and in the interval the banks were presented with a dilemma. When a bank is thick with deposits, it must increase its amount of outstanding loans or it won't be able to pay interest to its depositors without dipping into capital or selling off assets.

Adding to the dilemma, it was at just this time that the banks' traditionally best customers, the well capitalized and cautiously prosperous companies, began to shop elsewhere. Big companies, whose short-term commercial and industrial borrowings had long been the very bedrock of the banking business—in the industry, these loans are referred to as a bank's "C&I portfolio"—started turning instead to one another for capital. The commercial banks were forced into riskier waters, quite literally. The bankers gathered their courage, which they were not paid to have, as well as their geopolitical knowledge, which no one had ever accused them of harboring, and set out for foreign shores, where disaster lurked.

For example, hundreds of millions of dollars were privately loaned to Zaire, a country whose president controlled many rooms in his palace and several adjacent streets. Zaire was rich in copper, the bankers muttered confidently, ignoring the fact that most of the projects they were funding could barely be reached by road and seldom by phone; and ignoring, too, the nature and history of commodity prices, which tend to fall after rising and eventually collapse altogether when a cheaper substitute can be found, which more or less turned out to be the story (around 1978) of copper. Zaire could not repay the millions it had borrowed; Zaire told its creditors to take a hike.

But this did not stop the bankers from carrying the loans to Zaire on their books, where they collected dust next to the books describing the billions loaned to the generals running Brazil, the oligarchs of Peru, the Marcos mobsters in the Philippines, and the *nomenklatura* that pretended to run Poland, to name but a few more of the banks' most astonishing adventures. (See my report, "Bankers' Casino," in the February 1980 issue of *Harper's Magazine*.) Bank of America and Citibank in particular seemed to believe that taking cash from the repressive autocrats of the Gulf region and loaning it to their African, Latin American, and East-European counterparts was a wonderful way to do business, all theories about capitalism's relation to democracy notwithstanding. Since a loan, to a bank, is an asset, a bank making a lot of loans has a way of looking terrific; and small, poor countries, where all the financial reports and economic forecasts are released

from somewhere in the vicinity of the dictator's heel, have a way of looking terrific, too.

Here we readeth the heart of the lesson: The banker is concerned with appearances, and borrowed money and the value of collateral are, in fact, little more than sophisticated illusions. Such illusions are fine, and even necessary, in a context where the landscape is familiar and the rules are grasped by all involved: Think of yourself, your home, your mortgage, and your loan officer. Now think of our elegantly besuited friends in Zaire: What were they doing there? Moreover, did the borrower, wildly encouraged in this regard by the bankers, have any real grasp of the central fact that borrowed money had to be repaid?

In the late 1970s, the bankers were not breaking new ground; they were treading where their counterparts had trod in the 1920s: Those earlier bankers had also loaned a huge amount of money to, say, Peru, a country with no economy then and no economy now. Had they not learned where to tread no more? With dreary predictability—predictable to anyone but a banker with too much cash in his vaults—the money went but seldom returned.

There had to be *some* way for bankers to make big money as the Seventies gave way to the Eighties, perhaps in commercial real estate. In 1982 the White House and the Congress embraced the Garn-St. Germain Act, which eliminated restrictions on the percentage of loans in a bank's portfolio that could be for real-estate ventures, and for the first time allowed banks to loan to developers with next to no equity. The deregulated bankers jumped in with an ecstasy previously reserved for, well, Peru. With banks pouring in some $350 billion (representing 370 percent of their equity), a staggering 32 percent of all the existing office space in America was built in the 1980s.

Now, one thing has been known about real-estate markets for decades, and it is the one thing the bankers should have known but did not: The business is intensely cyclical, moving from boom to bust with the metronomic regularity of a butterfly drying its wings. Developers will continue to build as long as bankers lend them money, and if the developers are lent enormous sums of money, they will build enormously—at which point the market collapses with a shuddering fall caused by an absurd glut of the product. This was precisely what happened in 1990, more or less on schedule, by which time some regions of the country had an estimated ten-year oversupply of office space. This, in turn, led, as history should have taught bankers, to another entirely predictable phenomenon: Confronted with the consequences of their folly, developers boldly walked away, to live and build another day, and the banks got stuck with the property. In January Citibank announced that fully 18.9 percent of its $13.3 billion in commercial real-estate loans were non-performing. Citibank—along with Manufacturers Hanover, Chemical Bank, Chase Manhattan, and the government agents in charge of the Bank of New England—was suddenly in the real-estate business, stuck with streets and parks and plazas thick with empty offices.

Because real estate is something tangible, most of it will eventually be

ONE THING HAS BEEN KNOWN ABOUT THE REAL-ESTATE MARKET FOR DECADES, AND IT IS THE ONE THING THE BANKERS SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BUT DID NOT: IT IS INTENSELY CYCLICAL



OUR BANKERS SHOULD NEVER [illegible] STEPPED INTO THE SAME [illegible] OR, NEVER MIND THE SAME BOARDROOM, WITH MICHAEL MILKEN AND HIS IMITATORS, BUT THEY DID, AND ARE NOW LEFT HOLDING THE BAG

sold and the banks will recover a portion of their investment. But with the market currently in the tank, values depressed, and many prospective office renters shrinking their staffs rather than expanding them, whatever is to be recovered will not be recovered soon.

Almost from the moment in 1933 that the Glass-Steagall Act separated investment banking—doing stock deals for clients, underwriting securities, raiding some companies, merging others—from the commercial-banking functions of accepting deposits and making loans, the commercial bankers have lamented their expulsion into a wilderness where probity and rudimentary thinking were the twin keys to survival.* In the last two decades they have yelled and yanked at these bonds, crying at every turn (and at nearly every Republican fund-raiser) for their freedom.

Unfortunately, when the commercial bankers today plead for liberation, they neglect to mention that they are, to some extent, already in the investment-banking business, and aren't very good at it. In London, Frankfurt, and other financial capitals, nothing whatever prevents American commercial banks from indulging in securities transactions, and they have hardly compiled a stellar record; in 1988 alone, Citi racked up a $200 million loss in its foreign-stock trading.

There is also the matter of commercial bankers having been a party to the hostile corporate takeovers and the ridiculously leveraged buyouts that were a hallmark of the Decade of Greed just past. Loans to raiders and companies involved in high-flying corporate restructurings seemed a terrific thing in the 1980s, what with the high interest rates to be had and fees to be garnered. But when the economy weakened last year, many of the loans that should have looked risky to the bankers proved bad or worse. Earlier this spring the Bank of New York, the country's fifteenth largest bank, announced a first quarter loss of $63 million, declaring no less than $296 million of its loans to corporations—many of them to finance takeovers and such—to be in deep trouble. (The bank had made $102 million in the first quarter of 1990.) This should not be read as the end of the story, however: The Bank of New York has on its books a total of $4.22 billion in loans to highly leveraged companies.

In all, eleven U.S. banks have $3 billion or more in loans outstanding to companies that got into deep debt during the giddy days of Reagan and restructuring. Our bankers should never have stepped into the same elevator, never mind boardroom, with Michael Milken and his imitators, but they did, and they are now left holding the bag. With thirty-two companies failing, in the first three months of this year, to make on-time payments on their high-risk, high-yield "junk bonds," many big banks, already in trouble with deadbeat commercial real-estate loans, are girding for a significant hit on the corporate-loan front.

Before the administration's bank-reform package is voted on, Congress will hear much about how federally insured deposits will be kept in one part of the new, liberated banks, the wonderful new investment arm in another uninsured part—the parts forevermore separated by a "Chinese Wall," erected to keep insured money from getting behind uninsured deals. But it was precisely because such walls proved so unpatchably porous that Senator Glass and Congressman Steagall penned their legislation and got it passed. To those, like the President and his administration, who will point out that Glass-Steagall has been on the books fifty-eight

*Even in the 1980s, it should be said, there were bankers who continued to do business prudently. In Michigan and other Great Lakes states especially, bankers kept their heads and ignored the rush to potentially high-profit—but high-risk—ventures. As a result, only nine banks in the region failed in the last three years, and in 1990 no region had a higher percentage of earnings gains. See the *Wall Street Journal*, April 11, 1991.

years and must now be replaced with something modern, I need only say that the nature of banking man—wide-eyed, easily misled, and not at all entrepreneurial banking man—has not changed much in those fifty-eight years, and probably never will. Repealing Glass-Steagall is not simply a bad idea; it's an absolutely terrible idea.

So is the bailout of the banks, at least as currently construed. The FDIC's initial request of $3 billion is not nearly enough, and its $70 billion high-end estimate of how bad it could get is not high enough either. There are political reasons why neither the administration nor Congress wants to call attention just now to the banking crisis and its potentially enormous scale, reasons having mostly to do with their having not long ago succeeded (barely) in getting the S&L crisis off the front page and back to the business pages, where too few citizens venture each morning. The Gulf War notwithstanding, it was the happy collusion of the White House and Capitol Hill in agreeing to fund the S&L bailout "off budget," rather than "pay as you go," that made the issue suddenly a "non-starter," to the ill-concealed relief of all involved. The FDIC's borrowing from the Federal Reserve is similarly designed to keep "taxes" and "bailout" out of the same sentence and thus assure that no *political* costs develop.

Potentially adding to the cost of the bailout is the prevailing FDIC notion that some banks are simply too big to fail. This policy is blatantly unfair, penalizing the depositors of such small failed institutions as Harlem's Freedom National Bank, some of whose depositors—including important charities—did not recover all their money. "Too big to fail" also erodes the iron discipline of the marketplace that bankers like to invoke when they contemplate the rich pickings of fairy gold that lie just beyond their reach: It's an open invitation for the big banks to gamble—as they have done too often—secure in the knowledge that Uncle Sam lurks benignly in the flies, ready to descend as a deus ex machina if the FDIC ever runs low on insurance funds.



Banks, even very large ones, must be permitted to fail as an inevitable consequence of their own stupidity. True, the failure of a major bank presents us with the not-inconsiderable risk of a general bank panic, as depositors rush to convert their accounts into money in the mattress. But concerning panics, at least one thing ought to be kept in mind: The allegedly panicky depositors happen to be acting in an entirely rational fashion. Having perceived that the banking system has gotten itself into a spot of trouble, they want to manage their money themselves. The risk of a panic may be worth taking, if only it serves as a tonic for the bankers.

The bank reforms that are the most necessary happen to be of the unglamorous sort described by Thomas Hobbes when he defined the life of the masses: nasty, brutish, and short. Bank accounting practices badly need an overhaul so that they will finally be required to accurately describe a loan and state how much money is at risk. And the hallowed notion that banks should operate in secrecy—which prevents the public from discovering that something has gone badly wrong until the damage can no longer be contained—should be tossed on the ash heap of financial history. Most importantly, however, somebody ought to teach the bankers the banking business, because they don't seem to be very good at it anymore. Until that happens, all bets are off. ■

SOMEBODY OUGHT TO TEACH BANKERS THE BANKING BUSINESS, BECAUSE THEY DON'T SEEM TO BE VERY GOOD AT IT ANYMORE.

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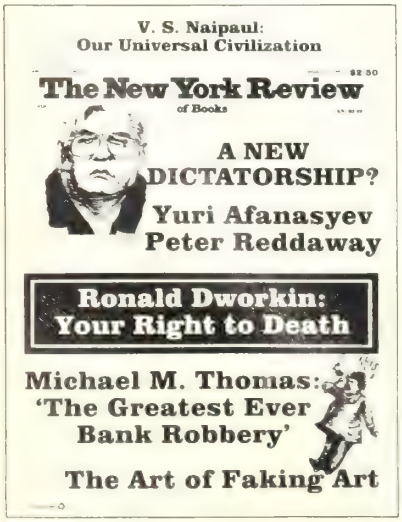


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READING MAY BE HARMFUL TO YOUR KIDS

In the Nadirland of today's children's books

By Tom Engelhardt

Once upon a time, there was a little red-haired girl so typical she didn't have a name. She couldn't do anything right! She couldn't even brush her teeth without the toothpaste falling on the floor. Fortunately, Great-Aunt Emma paid her a visit. Being a role model, Great-Aunt Emma never did anything wrong. She gave the girl a magic locket her mother once gave her. It can help you do whatever you want, she said, if you believe in it. The little girl believed, and toothpaste no longer fell off her toothbrush. One day, she pried open the locket and inside saw her own reflection in a tiny mirror. Why, she thought, I'm the magic in the locket! From then on, she was never without the locket or, assumedly, her raised self-esteem.

For $12.95, *The Magic Locket*, a two-year-old best-selling children's book, is yours. Inset into its cover is a "gold" locket and chain (tiny mirror included) for that dear one whose self-confidence worries you.

Once upon a time as well, there was a sad, reasonably profitable little business called children's-book publishing. Like the girl, it suffered from low self-esteem; and worse yet, its most loving customer, the library, was losing its funding. No one in adult publishing thought children's books were worth much attention, or the people who produced them much prestige. Authors were paid advances that would hardly feed a teddy bear; editors, salaries worthy of elves.

Tom Engelhardt was for many years an editor at Pantheon. A recent recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, he is working on a book about children's culture, to be published by W. W. Norton.

One day, in the late 1970s, children's-book publishing was visited by Great-Aunt Adult Publishing, who gave her meek little niece a magic locket. No one knew whether its magic was demographic (a middle-class baby boom, the rise of the two-salary family), geographic (the proximity of families to fast-spreading chain bookstores in a fast-spreading mall culture), or psychological (a growing anxiety about the future that partially came to focus on children's reading skills). In truth, no one much cared, since once the publishers of children's books slipped the locket on, amazing things began to happen. Where there had been fewer than 20 specialized children's bookstores nationwide, suddenly there were 400; the number of new titles published yearly more than doubled to well above 5,000; sales more than quadrupled; publicity and ad budgets soared; previously unwanted authors now toured the country, and some were offered near-adult-size advances ($1.5 million for a recent two-book contract); and children's book clubs multiplied, reaching directly into the home to offer parents "the key to a lifelong love of reading." Most wondrous of all, a business previously geared to "classic" backlist titles developed real Product to push—not just books galore but videos, audios, games, calendars, T-shirts. When children's publishing pried its locket open and looked inside, what stared back was a $1 billion business.

In February 1988 Diane Roback, children's-book editor at the trade magazine *Publishers Weekly*, launched the first national children's-

book bestseller list. It now appears in the magazine once a month. Its thirty titles, heavily weighted toward fiction and excluding backlist bestsellers like *Charlotte's Web*, range from unpaginated peekaboo books for toddlers to 250-page thrillers for adolescents. Based on sales reports from specialized children's bookstores and the major book chains, the *PW* children's-book list crowns a success story in which the little business that didn't think it could, did. An implicit celebration of the coming of adult publishing methods to the children's-book world, the list is an acknowledgment that growing up, in publishing terms, is now a market-driven phenomenon, measurable in dollars and corporate clout.

To an outsider, a reading of the books on two of the twelve lists published last year—July's and September's—offered a disturbing vision, one revealing the complex relationship between glut and deprivation in our age. For no matter how the children's-book business seems to be thriving, what is most striking about these bestsellers is their starved nature. Most of them have been stripped down to the generic or the genre—reduced, in fact, to something like a single formulaic literature of anxiety and reassurance, the reassurance sometimes lying only in the fact that another book just like the first is still to be purchased, and another, and . . .

IN A NUMBER OF BEST-SELLING CHILDREN'S BOOKS, SHOPPING HABITS HAVE COME TO SERVE AS A TELLING INDICATOR OF "CHARACTER"

In every sense, social context is missing. *Time:* There is only the present moment. One bestseller, set in Denmark during the Holocaust, reaches back to 1943; the rest, not even to yesterday. (Among the rare nonfiction bestsellers on the lists I looked at, there was not a single history or biography aside from Andrew Gutelle's *Baseball's Best*, five pancake-flat tales of sports heroics.) *Place:* Except for Denmark, and the rain forest in a picture book urging the saving of same, there is nowhere but the Great Here—predominantly a land of suburban, middle-class malls, or at best a rural area. Reading these books, one could easily imagine the city had yet to be invented.

Character in the books I read tends to be reduced to the emblematic trait, and names to three- or four-letter Americanisms. One finds *diversity* of a sort—a suburban version of an all-ethnic sub crew from some late-night movie in which blue-eyed, light-haired whiteness is, nonetheless, specially valued. *Style*, however, in all the books has given way to a uniform blandness.

All told, whatever might be wondrous or inexplicable to a child has simply been eliminated, and what energy these books hold seems borrowed from an adult world in the process of discovering its new power over children.

During the 1980s—a decade when, by almost any statistical measure, the situation of children was worsening, globally and nationally—the middle-class American child's private space miraculously filled up with toys, tapes, technological gimmicks, even books, a flood of books. Many of the bestsellers I read, stripped down though they may be, celebrate this bounty by portraying children mainly as consumers and the mall as the site of their encounters with abundance. In a number of these books, shopping habits have come to serve as a telling indicator of "character"—the positive characters being told from the negative ones by whether they shop for themselves ("selfish") or for parents, teachers, and siblings.

The teenage heroine of Lois Duncan's thriller *Don't Look Behind You*, for example, has undergone many trials due to her father's work as an FBI informant, including loss of name, home, and boyfriend, as well as her near murder by a psychotic mob hit man named Vamp, before, at book's end, she starts a new, more hopeful life, working weekends at Burger King. Soon she spots Mr. Right Jr. at the local mall. We know it's him because he's buying a present for his *mother*.

It is hardly surprising that such books often betray a certain wistful unease. Lines like "This was no TV drama, it was hard-core reality" are commonplace in many of these clearly TV-inspired dramas. It was not always this way. There was an earlier, very different boom in children's publishing that began in the mid-Sixties, just as the American consensus started to break down. That boom, funded by Great Society money pouring into children's libraries (in such quantity, in fact, that it was sometimes a challenge for librarians to spend allotted sums within a mandated year), supported a new group of children's writers and new children's books for all ages.

That period, however, is best remembered for the new fiction it produced for young adults. Such fiction took on a single form—the novel of social realism (which the trade soon reduced to a more salable formula, "the problem novel"). Often urban and very gritty, these books offered an angry vision of breakdown, familial and societal. War, race, drugs, sex, injustice, the Bomb, death—everything had to be reconsidered, and kids weren't to be exempt; nor were they to be exempt from the vision of social equality embedded in such



writing. That this new fiction for children should have been linked to the library seems, in retrospect, only just, since the library is the institution that comes closest in our society to the concept of equal access to culture.

By the mid-Seventies, as government funding dried up, children's publishers were left without the libraries to underwrite their efforts. However, help was on the way in the form of the fast-growing chain bookstore just then staking its claim to the suburban mall and of the upscale children's bookstore that seemed to be springing up wherever one found Young Urban Professionals. These bookstores created the possibility that parent or child could finally meet children's books in a big way with neither librarian nor teacher in attendance. All that was needed was the cover price of admission. Thus was established the basis for a second boom in children's publishing, and a quite different form of children's book was born—the book designed for the consumer child.

This second boom (which as yet shows few signs of slowdown) was built on a new-style demographics and a new-style anxiety. The new demographics were clear enough. The children of the baby boomers were arriving. As the Eighties progressed, more and more children, whose parents were primed to spend money "enhancing" their kids' lives, entered our world with potential purchasing power. (Projections indicate that K–8 school enrollment will not peak until 1996, and high school enrollment not until the next century.)

The new-style anxiety on which the boom rode was more complex. A blame-the-schools panic about the failure of American education, partly focused on falling reading scores, reflected a larger anxiety about the nature (and even the existence) of the future for child, parent, country, globe. It seemed, though, that even if we could do nothing about schools, government, or any other future-shaping institution, we could, at least, become better parents. Reading, then, was pushed hard both as a royal road to future success (the earlier mastered, the better) and as a parental responsibility.

What this offered children's-book publishing was not just a business boom of unexpected proportions but a responsibility equal to it: to nurture in the young—increasingly vulnerable to screen culture, glued to Nintendo, and ready to make fashion statements at the local mall—a most crucial (yet imperiled) habit, the habit of reading. That habit was invoked with reverential seriousness by the people producing the flood of new books. To inculcate that habit in the young was, it seemed, not so much a vocation as a consummate challenge in a world where competitive distractions for children came ever thicker and faster. In fact, the

Illustrations by Henrik Drescher

issue was increasingly not so much what you read but that you read at all. Anything with words that attracted children (or parents) was seen as a good first step onto a lifelong path leading to that other, less popular adult "joy."

The flood of new titles in the new bookstores, however, presented a problem of differentiation for the audience—which, to those doing the selling, meant opportunity. For adolescents who could buy the books themselves, it meant developing new strategies in cover design, in publicity, and in the creation of more quickly recognizable and repeatable genres. For adults, the main purchasers of children's books, it meant a new set of experts ready to decode, often in book form, a mass of new (and old) books so that parents would know which to read when, and how, and to whom. (Unconsidered were what messages parents who do not read for pleasure themselves might convey to their children by insistently reading to them or pressuring them to hold, scratch, sniff, gnaw, or rend books soon after emerging into the post-womb environment.)

WALDO WANDERS THROUGH DOUBLE-PAGE SPREADS AS WELL AS ONTO CLOTHES, LUNCHBOXES, POSTERS, WATCHES, EVEN THE ADULT BESTSELLER LIST

The world might have been getting scarier in every way, but we were to become better, more knowledgeable, more attentive parents. Naturally, part of the child (and parent) population was left to fading library collections in underfunded schools and tax-starved communities, or more likely to the TV set; but the rest of us were offered a chance to sample the abundance of children's books in a new, tamer form.

This new world of children's books, as a look at *PW*'s bestseller lists indicates, is not, despite its mass, shapeless. Though organized only according to vague categories (Picture Books, Younger Readers, Middle Readers, Young Adults, Nonfiction), and not including best-selling children's "classics," *PW*'s monthly lists nevertheless offer us a vision of the various way stations on the road to the habit of reading.

What is most striking about the list's first stretch, those books in which three- to eight-year-old readers-to-be are supposed to gain a hint of the pleasure reading holds out to them, is the degree of straightforward commerce clogging it, which was inconceivable when a librarian stood between the child and the book. On the lists I looked at, a significant number of the picture books and the books for young readers were either Product themselves or enmeshed in a world of Product. There was *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The First Battle*, one of several licensed Turtle spin-offs from the larger on-screen world of child fads ("*Thud, thud.* April's footsteps echoed through the silent, deserted lot. . . . *Whish!* A ninja dagger whistled through the air . . ."); two preachy Berenstain Bears titles from a book series that has its own video and audio tapes ("Sister does have to share the blame. . . . But you know, my dear, privilege and responsibility aren't just for cubs. They're for parents, too"); and the remarkable Waldo phenomenon, in which a hard-to-find little man wanders through double-page spreads stuffed with *MAD*-magazineish tomfoolery as well as onto clothes, lunchboxes, greeting cards, posters, watches, dolls, innumerable other products, the adult bestseller list, and soon his own animated TV show.

There were gimmicks like *Red Foley's Best Baseball Book Ever*, basically baseball stickers between covers. And there were the Sweet Valley Kids and Baby-sitters Little Sister titles, "prequels" to two monthly paperback series for older girls with their own videos ("Now you can watch your favorite baby-sitters!"), games ("Now you, too, can be like Kristy, Stacey and Claudia when you play. . ."), belt packs, and so on for younger sisters as well as their older sibs.

For even the youngest readers, the "book" has, in a sense, been freed from the page and can now be encountered in an almost unending variety of audio, video, play, and fashion formats. In the same sense, the habits of reading, listening, viewing, playing, dressing, and buying have come more and more to resemble one another.

That children, culture, and commercialism have long been wedded is undeniable. After all, John Newbery, the eighteenth-century publisher who first grasped the existence of a children's-book market, worked his patent medicines right into his books. In *The History of Little Goody Twoshoes*, the heroine's father actually dies for lack of Newbery's "fever powder." Nonetheless, past commercial book ventures for children—even those of a few decades ago—seem quaint and limited, matters of momentary opportunism, when set against the ongoing rhythms of the present entertainment environment, which involves not just the blurring of bookish boundaries but the changing nature of childhood itself.

Once, not so very long ago, young children possessed a sort of "freed" time, often boring, sometimes magical, when they were simply overlooked; a time of so little interest to adults that it was almost timeless. This was when children played most "childishly" at their own

games—usually with little or no attending paraphernalia—sending messages to one another in an incantatory folk poetry often hundreds of years old, and movingly documented in the books of anthropologists Iona and Peter Opie. Being overlooked offered children, in the words of the Opies, "the necessary space—or privacy—in which to become human beings." And in such time as remains their own, children to this day experiment with sending one another messages as bizarre, sexualized, questioning, and sometimes (from an adult point of view) deeply disturbing as anything an adult could dream up.

Nowadays, however, neither children nor their time is overlooked. The child has been discovered as an organizable bundle of buying desires, and freed time has come to seem like empty time in need of being filled. Books are, of course, only one among many products with which adults are filling that time. Nonetheless, the sheer commercial scale of the new world of children's books gives pause.

Nothing captures that scale better than the girls' series for middle and early-adolescent readers. Though it may be no news to parents that children and publishers have long found comfort in the repetitiveness of series (an updated Nancy Drew book was on one recent *PW* list), during the Sixties boom, new series were rare and looked down upon in the business. The prototypes of today's successful girls' series, launched into mall bookstores in the late 1970s, were patterned on the Silhouette romances then being read by grown women. Ever since, most series have been aimed at girls—in a business in which females largely edit, publish, buy, and read the books. (Even now, fathers are believed to make only about 8 percent of parental visits to children's bookstores.)

At the heart of the pair of *PW* lists I studied are two ever-multiplying paperback series designed for girls—eight books in all, any one of which may have had an initial printing of 300,000 copies. Books in the series are contracted for en masse and churned out on a monthly schedule. The Baby-sitters Club, set in a Connecticut town and modeled on TV soaps ("While Kristy was starting the club, her mom was falling in love with a real, true millionaire. . . . And just as the two families were starting to become one . . ."), features a group of seven preteens who form a baby-sitting business, their jobs providing the minimal adventure offered. Sweet Valley High, a romance series for the slightly older, preadolescent crowd, set in pristine Sweet Valley, California (near the pristine Sweet Valley Mall), focuses on sixteen-year-old twin sisters with "silky blond hair and perfect size-six figures," Elizabeth and Jessica. The series' creator, Francine Pascal, who originally aimed for a TV show, now only does, in her words, "detailed outlines and character-setting bibles." The actual books are works-for-hire, their plots just thick

Goodnight, *Goodnight Moon*?

The twenty best-selling paperback children's books of 1990

1. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. B. B. Hiller. Dell (1,775,149 copies).
2. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Final Lesson*. Astrid Holm; illustrated by Frank Mateu. Random House (1,423,664).
3. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The First Battle*. Crystal Herman; illustrated by Larry Daste. Random House (1,337,303).
4. *New Kids on the Block*. Grace Catalano. Bantam (exact figure unavailable).
5. *Mary Anne and Too Many Boys* (Baby-sitters Club #34). Ann M. Martin. Scholastic (796,000).
6. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Movie Storybook*. Katherine Ross; illustrated by GEE Studio. Random House (791,722).
7. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Six-Guns and Shurikens*. Dave Morris. Dell (780,015).
8. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Buried Treasure*. Dave Morris. Dell (725,119).
9. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Red Herrings*. Dave Morris. Dell (700,655).
10. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Sky High*. Dave Morris. Dell (700,311).
11. *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth*. EarthWorks Group. Andrew and McMeel (655,000).
12. *Our Story: New Kids on the Block*. Joseph, Jonathan, Donnie, Danny, and Jordan. Bantam (exact figure unavailable).
13. *Where's Waldo? The Ultimate Fun Book!* Martin Handford. Little, Brown (606,404).
14. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Totally Awesome Activity Book*. Shelley Greene; illustrated by Jim Lawson and Dan Burger. Random House (527,416).
15. *Charlotte's Web*. E. B. White. HarperCollins (513,471).
16. *The Berenstain Bears and the Slumber Party*. Stan and Jan Berenstain. Random House (458,797).
17. *Baby-sitters' Island Adventure* (Super Special #4). Ann M. Martin. Scholastic (402,000).
18. *Stacey and the Mystery of Stoneybrook* (Baby-sitters Club #35). Ann M. Martin. Scholastic (376,000).
19. *Dawn's Wicked Stepsister* (Baby-sitters Club #31). Ann M. Martin. Scholastic (358,100).
20. *Where the Wild Things Are*. Maurice Sendak. HarperCollins (353,256).

enough to provide material for the short description on the back cover.

To date, there have been more than seventy Sweet Valley High titles published, with more arriving as you read these words. Company handouts claim an astonishing 65 million Sweet Valley and 43 million Baby-sitters books in print. With their spin-off businesses, these series most resemble those TV cartoons whose toy- and fad-driven, half-animated figures and recyclable plots are meant to send the young into a consuming frenzy. Not surprisingly, the most challenging moments in such books come in daunting single-spaced rules for entering essay contests like the one for "Sweet Valley Reader of the Month." ("Winners . . . and their parents or legal guardians may be required to execute an Affidavit of Eligibility and Promotional Release . . .")

It is not only the scale of their commercial success that distinguishes these series from their predecessors. The descent of adult methods into children's publishing has also meant the descent of junior versions of distinctly adult genres—the TV soap opera, the woman's romance, the thriller—deeper and deeper into the world of childhood; and with them, a certain generic sameness has blanketed bestsellerdom. Grounded in the repetitive demographics of problem-of-the-week familial desolation



(separation, divorce, remarriage), such books are made "valuable" for children not so much by the presence on the page of traditional moral admonitions as through the therapeutic redress of grievances.

What shores them up as products is their particular form of blandness—as much a matter of product control as in any fast-food outlet. In such lulling blandness, however, lies a very modern bleakness in which character is viewed as nothing more than an unalterable compilation of assigned emotional "traits" (and their attached "problems"). If Sweet Valley's Elizabeth is "sensitive" on page 3 of *Who's to Blame?*, on page 114 she can only be consoled thusly by a therapeutically oriented girlfriend: "Most kids feel really guilty when their parents split up, and you're—well, you're pretty sensitive . . ." These books feed on a modern phrenology: The first trait you meet is the last you're likely to see, and all traits/characters hardly add up to a single person. As Francine Pascal has said of her twin creations: "The trick is to think of Elizabeth and Jessica as the good and bad sides of one person."

In recent years the paperback series has come to dominate the worlds of middle and young-adult readers. Scores of these paperbacks now crowd the shelves at mall (and other) bookstores, selling in unprecedented numbers. In fact, in the face of series glut, the difficulty of launching a single, nonseries, young-adult novel, even one by a fairly well-known author, has emerged as a common publishing plaint.

This new fiction of "commercial realism" contrasts sharply with the breakthrough in young-adult fiction of the Sixties. Then, a new group of writers not that far removed from life without TV tried to capture what an embattled world without magic really feels like to a child growing up. To name only a few such books, filled with the edgy, raw energy of their time: sixteen-year-old S. E. Hinton's remarkable *The Outsiders*, in which her "greaser" hero, Ponyboy, plays out his class-driven animosities against the rich and dreadful "Socs"; Virginia Hamilton's *The Planet of Junior Brown*, in which two black boys, one homeless, the other weighing 300 pounds and hearing voices, try to construct for themselves a tomorrow in a world where entertainment means stoning rats along New York's Hudson River; Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy*, in which a rich Manhattan child replaces the magic of Mary Poppins with a knee-high view of warted reality (and the nanny leaves by cab, not the east wind); and, a few years later, *The Chocolate War*, the first of Robert Cormier's tense novels, in which abusive adult (and peer) power crushes a no-exit teenage hero.

What the series did in the Eighties was to force the "individual" novel to become more

series-like, so that even if all series were to disappear tomorrow, the serial style of conceptualizing, writing, packaging, and marketing books would remain. This is evident in the work of Gary Paulsen and Christopher Pike, the two skilled nonseries authors who dominated the Young Adults category on the *PW* lists I looked at.

In Gary Paulsen's best-selling adolescent novels, the intertwining of bleakness and personal uplift runs deep, as teenage boys face their irreparably shattered families on something close to a horror-film landscape. His tough but sentimental wilderness novels are perhaps the best commercial fiction can now offer in the way of positive-thinking scenarios in the ruins of a post-nuclear-family world. His parents are invariably divorced, abusive, or absent ("and that night my mother got me under the kitchen table and tried to kill me with a butcher knife," begins *The Foxman*). His "frontier" is that place where the family has ceased to exist. In his two paperbacks that made 1990's *PW* lists, what comes to replace the shattered family is a call-of-the-wild therapy group.

In each book a child survivor of the divorce or abuse wars is forced to learn more than just wilderness-survival skills. What must be learned too are those emotional skills a child needs in order to accept that home is not just about family but exists anywhere you can hang on, with anyone or anything you can hang on to, including yourself. In *Foxman* a boy is saved from loss of family by a phantom-of-the-backwoods trapper with a war-mutilated face ("like a nightmare with no nose and no lips so you could see the teeth like a skeleton"). In *Hatchet*, skunks, porcupines, tornadoes, and other elements of the natural world take on the healing role, while an "insane" moose replaces the psychotic killer of typical junior thrillers.

"Come on, he thought, baring his teeth in the darkness. . . . Is that all you can hit me with—a moose and a tornado? Well, he thought, holding his ribs and smiling, then spitting mosquitos out of his mouth. Well, that won't get the job done. . . . He had changed, and he was tough. I'm tough where it counts—tough in the head." So concludes *Hatchet*'s thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson, alone in the wilderness after a pilot taking him for a post-divorce visit to his father has had a heart attack and crashed his plane into an isolated lake. And speaking of tough-in-the-head, speaking of messed-up faces, speaking of horror films, "The fish [Brian] had been eating all this time had to eat, too. They had been at the pilot . . . almost two months, nibbling and chewing and all that remained was the not quite cleaned skull and . . . it wobbled loosely."

If Paulsen skirts close to basic screen horror, in *See You Later* and *Hall Pass* Christopher Pike pioneers entirely new territory. His books might be described as novelizations of horror films that haven't yet been made. In these books of muted torture, adults exist only as distant figures of desertion; ET—the extraterrestrial teenager—does not call home, and junior-grade psychos reign supreme. If sex never proceeds beyond The Kiss, no mutilation is too terrible for the human face. ("The swollen black cheeks. The twisted purple mouth. The pink slit throat. It was a pity . . . that Ann could no longer close her own eyes and look away from what was left of her body.")

EVEN IF ALL SERIES WERE TO DISAPPEAR TOMORROW, THE SERIAL STYLE OF WRITING, PACKAGING, AND MARKETING OF BOOKS WOULD REMAIN

See You Later grabs and shakes its readers. Mark Forum, teenage creator of computer games, lives alone in L.A. and falls in love with Becky, who works in a mall bookstore, but Becky is in love with Ray, a jock, who in a future of nuclear destruction is actually Frederick, a crazed general and psychotic killer, but never mind because Becky is actually Kara ("I'm from the future, Mark. I've come back for you"), who returns to try to split up her younger self and Ray, using Mark, who is actually Vincent, who accompanies Kara back from that future incinerated by Frederick, né Ray, before being saved by the Illumni, which are strange light forms. Quoting *The Wizard of Oz* ("Remember the part at the end . . . Dorothy closes her eyes and repeats, 'There's no place like home . . .' "), Mark, Kara, and Vincent re-create themselves in the present as an upscale suburban "family," while hearts impaled on knives are left throbbing on kitchen tables and faces are mashed and bodies mangled by brand-name cars.

Without the clutter of past classics, the *PW* children's-book list offers a purified sweep through the most popular, "age-appropriate" books of the moment—a mapping of the geography of a new-style young reader better suited to our consumer age. The *PW* bestsellers, from New Kids on the Block memorabilia to the latest teen thrillers, are not anomalies in the world of the child but the sort of product now largely defining children's lives.

Books may seem like the least—and least disturbing—objects in the consumer package being designed to fill children's time, as any

publisher competing with Nintendo and the like will be quick to point out. If previously unimaginable numbers of books are now crowding into that childhood time, why should anyone complain? After all, isn't a child better off reading a thriller in the style of *Friday the Thirteenth* than seeing the film, or picking up *The Love Bet* rather than hunkering down in front of an afternoon soap? The answer is obviously yes, and it is here that people in the industry point with pride to the way in which even the most genre-tied of such books is establishing the habit of reading. To a children's-book publisher, the habit of reading means never having to say you're sorry.

There is, however, nothing necessarily beneficial about a habit. Television can be a habit. Cocaine can be a habit. Reading, too, can be a habit. The question is: What sort of a habit? It may be true, as it was for me, that it matters little how you get to books or which ones you get to first. But what if behind that first book there is always another almost like it?

What is at issue here is not whether a child will somehow be damaged by a book, any book, or whether there aren't wonderful children's books amidst the thousands of new titles churned out yearly. (*PW*'s 1990 bestseller lists do include a few such books: Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, amusingly retold from the Wolf's point of view; David Macaulay's *The Way Things Work*, undoubtedly aimed largely at parents mystified by their children's questions; Roald Dahl's minor but bracingly mean-spirited *Matilda*; Louis Sachar's nutty *School Is Falling Down*, which includes a perverse little story about a severed ear and the hairiness of mammals impossible to recapitulate here.) What is at issue is the *mass itself*, and whether the habit of reading in the context of such a mass may not represent something other than the simple development of a wonderful lifelong practice. Certainly, the entry into children's time of a full-blown commercial apparatus and an ever-larger cast of adults bent on selling Product to the child have also meant the entry into childhood of a new dependency. Previously, it was assumed that dependency on parents would end in some form of independence at adulthood. In this newer world of commercial planning for children, however, early brand loyalty means a lifetime adventure in dependence. This, it seems to me, is what the "habit" of reading is coming to mean in children's books—and the only exit increasingly being offered from such a world is into infantilized best-selling genres for adults.

Despite a continuing chorus calling for adults to share books with children and praising the way children's books are finally dealing with problems previously hidden, children may actually share less of the world of adults and books than they did when their only recourse was the library. The people now running children's publishing grew up in the library, not the bookstore. There, barring a strict librarian, they soon graduated unobserved into a world in which adults wrote for one another without concern for what a child might think. In fact, part of the pleasure for young readers was undoubtedly to "spy"—through books available on open stacks—on the nature of adulthood. Now the people who preside over publishing houses seem hell-bent on liberating children from exactly what once drove so many of them adventurously out into the larger world of reading.

The result may be children increasingly sealed off from access to the full range of adult life, alone in a "child's" world of books, in a space filling up with junior versions of adult products, adult anxieties, adult fears, and adult shadows, but not adults. Would Harriet the Spy, that fictional child sometimes credited with helping to start the Sixties boom, be conceivable now? Her transgression, which shocked the children's-book world in 1964, was that she spied unrepentantly on the lives of unknowing adults (as well as on her peers). Today, what would a new Harriet spy on, now that both the free-running imagination of the child and the voice of the adult are being squeezed out of the child's world in proportion, one might say, to the degree that it is filling up with books?

At one point Peter Pan, in the J. M. Barrie book, is consumed with anger at adults "who, as usual, were spoiling everything" and so forces himself to breathe with great rapidity; for in the Neverland it is believed that every time you breathe a grown-up dies. Traditionally, a book had to be cleared, violently or otherwise, of parents, to free a child to adventure boldly into her or his terrain—hence the continuing popularity of the orphan long after the orphanage ceased to be a central social institution.

Now, it seems, each new breath in the Nadirland of children's-book publishing only creates more adults scripting "choose-your-own adventures" that limit what choices children are likely to make in the privacy of their imaginations. The saddest thing about this phenomenon is simply that children, buying these books, have no way of knowing that they are being shortchanged by grown-ups; for where children are deepest, least reachable, most unnerving, is exactly where this world of books is becoming shallower, more obvious, more expectable, and yet is weighing more heavily on the young. ■

ABSENCES

On losing, by degrees, one's father

By James Conaway

I had been going home to Memphis for twenty-five years when I first noticed that my father was losing his mind. I say first noticed, but the signs had for a long time stretched across the sheets of graph paper on which he occasionally wrote letters—he was an engineer but would not have used formal stationery in any case—in a hand so crabbed that the letters grew increasingly brief and finally ceased. I should have asked why; I should have put aside the concerns of my own life and formally recognized the little routine absences that were leading, inexorably, to an absence of life.

In truth, I knew little about my father's ailment, not enough to admit that "it" even existed beyond the natural mental perambulations of an independent old man who had lived within the bounds of propriety, disappointment, and some hardship. There were other signs: a hesitancy on the telephone, an awkwardness with numbers—for years it had been his business to calculate how much refrigerated air a Memphis skyscraper needed to remain habitable—and a slight stammer. I attributed that to bourbon and learned too late it had little to do with that recreational beverage. What it had to do with has a name but the name is irrelevant, even harmful, since the naming doesn't alleviate the pain and relegates the victim, as it relegated my father, to the role of an incurable in an age



of medical self-congratulation.

It was late autumn—monsoon season—and the ragged skies rolling out of Arkansas would have dropped tornadoes on a city less blessed than Memphis. I had flown in from Knoxville in a polished steel tube, owned by a bank in east Tennessee, that was filled to capacity with successful dealers in estates, real and imagined. One of them would soon be indicted and sent to prison, but for the moment they were happily chasing deals around the South, and I was to write about them for the *Washington Post*, my employer at the time. Dad met me on the street where the bankers' limousine left me, at the wheel of his small car; I knew immediately something was wrong. The face beneath the snap-brim hat seemed diminished, the eyes full of misgiving. The neighborhood should have been familiar territory, but he regarded it as alien. "Hello, sonny boy," he said when I got in; I kissed him and felt the stubble and smelled the remnants of my own childhood, not tobacco now, not whiskey, but the enfeebled suggestions of black coffee, Noxzema, and the dead leaves he moved ceaselessly from lawn to street.

He drove without talking, concentrating on the task at hand, running a stop sign, turning a corner without regard for the oblique stream of oncoming traffic or horn blasts, passing a pedestrian who wisely decided not to challenge our passage because otherwise he would have been killed, probably not by the violence of the initial blow but by the car's dogged persistence in running him over. Dad did not intend to stop until he had returned to the shelter of the carport, attached to a house that had been sleek and modern in the Sixties, set back among the trees and shrubs that render east Memphis botanical anarchy in the spring and that now, in November, enfolded the low eaves in near-tropical profusion.

My mother met us at the door in bathrobe and slippers—the uniform. Looking after my father had become a full-time endeavor. Together we got him out of his hat and raincoat and seated on the low couch, where he watched the evening news without interest. When Mom and I were alone, I said savagely, "He shouldn't be driving," and she said, "It's all he's got left."

He was known as Connie, and he decided to go fight the Japanese when I was a baby. I shouldn't be able to remember that day but I do: hot metal stairs leading up to a railway platform in midtown, my father's smooth cheeks and shining summer dress uniform, the hat emblazoned with a gold eagle as he leans out the door of the departing train, an immaculate white wedge, smiling unhappily, one hand raised

James Conaway is the author of several books, including Napa: The Story of an American Eden. *He lives in Washington, D.C.*

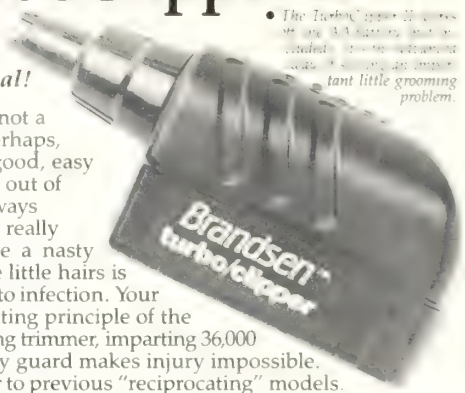
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as if testing the wind. Connie didn't have to enlist in the Navy, being too old for the draft and not skilled enough to be crucial; my mother never forgave him. As a Seabee he fought alongside the Marines on Guam and Peleliu and came back to Memphis full of stories of air raids and a sun hotter than the one at home, of tropical birds that flew backward, of an enemy that holed up in caves or floated facedown, dead, in mountain pools, or appeared at dawn, naked, uniforms neatly bundled and placed on rocks, to surrender. At least some of the stories were buttressed by hardware: a knife made from the wreckage of a Japanese aircraft, glass balls that had held afloat the fishing nets of other yellow people on that far ocean. Nothing reinforced the exotic quality of Connie's war more than those smooth, green globes, the smoky glass full of bubbles and strange imperfections.

My mother's resentment was poured out in letters. She kept his replies wrapped in ribbon in a box on the closet floor. He joined us in the house of his mother-in-law and her new husband, a house where, for him, work became the closest thing to having fun, a bulwark against a future that stretched before him, unavoidably. He built and painted fences, and installed a huge attic fan that sucked moths flat against the screens, and put in a bathroom upstairs. I was pressed into helping whenever my older brother managed to escape. "Jimbo, would you like to bring me that hammer?" Dad would say. "Jimbo, would you like to run over there and get me that board?" "Jimbo, would you like to crawl up under there and see if you can find that goddamn roll of electrical tape?" In the process I learned journeyman carpentry and glimpsed in the intentness of Dad's gaze and the alacrity of his muscular hands, heard in his murmured, monumental impatience, the unease that lay behind his domestic complicity. I didn't know then that other men were out playing golf, shooting ducks, trolling for smallmouth bass, drinking in comfortable chairs, doing the things men did on weekends.

Dad spent those years moving his file cabinets and battered desk from one building to another, taking advantage of developers' offers as Memphis shifted ever eastward. He made a modest living selling cooling devices to building contractors. Even I was aware of some irony in that: His family predated my mother's in Memphis. His mother's forebear, a fierce, one-legged Confederate veteran, had once owned a sizable piece of what became Overton Park; his descendants qualified as burghers.

As the younger brother of the bluff, funny Edwin, my father grew up believing in the successful enterprise. I remember a certain windiness when Uncle Edwin entered a room. He had introduced ice to the mid-South, and that had made him rich. Edwin Conaway's ice houses—barns with sweaty oak doors opening into the murk, hung with sides of beef and ham haunches and stacked blue-green slabs of ice giving off fog in layers that crept along floors and spilled over thresholds—were money machines. He used them to build a fortune in stocks.

My father, sixteen years younger than Edwin, had seemed destined to get rich through ice, too. First he went off to Washington and Lee; Edwin had offered to pay his way. But while in Lexington he received word that Edwin and his ice houses were in trouble—the '29 crash had caught him—and his life now took another turn. Dad left W & L to take up something more practical; he enrolled in engineering school at a state university. Years later, Edwin, driving at night along a two-lane highway, far from Memphis, met on the downward slope of a hill the opposite and equal force of his own headlight-flashing sedan (the other car was driven by a drunk on the wrong side of the road) and died of it.

The process of recognizing my father's predicament, if that is the right word, must be common to other families: discomfort, denial, acquiescence, grief, anger. The doctors were particularly inept, ranging from the affable family physician, who assured us that all old people lose their memories and functions, to a tactless psychiatrist whose specialty was assisting the aged; he wore a heavy gold ID bracelet and demanded that my father count backward from 100 and, in the midst of Dad's struggling to do so, proudly proclaimed dementia.

Money was a problem. Though the disease had a name it had no cure, and so my father could not be committed to the hospital. For this reason the government could not be induced to help pay. It fell to my mother, also in her seventies, to care for an invalid who increasingly failed to remember names, hid the mail, shuffled and sometimes stumbled, defied the most potent pharmacopoeia to keep her awake, dribbled his food, railed at her for the loss of his right to drive and other frustrations, and eventually threatened violence if the increasingly phantasmagoric landscape would not hold still. Yet she refused to entomb him in a nursing home. They owned the house but could not afford both it and a nurse, and buying a smaller place was a subject that could not be discussed calmly. Mom talked instead of nonexistent equity, including stock in a moviemaking company that supposedly had Goldie Hawn in tow, sold to my mother by another specialist in assisting the aged. Those lucre-driven arguments released a rancor in me that I will always regret.

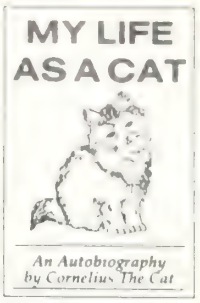
During visits to Memphis my brothers and I shot pool with Dad, always the best. We watched him clean the table with displays of his beautiful follow-through as he disregarded color and numbers on the balls, sinking the cue ball off the eight and the eight off the eleven and so on until he lost interest and we started the game all over again.

Once, when I announced I was going to take a shower, Dad said, "Don't forget a spoon."

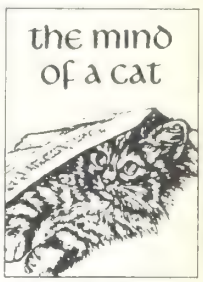
He fell in love with women on sight and offered, in a friendly way, to knock me down if I didn't stop talking to the female director of the Alzheimer's clinic to whom he was suddenly attracted. He never lost his appetite while still at home, demolishing roast beef, sweet potatoes,

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grits, biscuits, and lemon meringue pie without discrimination or regard for the manners that had once been important, but somehow he kept growing smaller.

As it happened, my mother succumbed first, to an aneurysm—a ballooning of a blood vessel—in the right side of the brain. Fortunately, by then they had hired a man to work around the house, since Dad was no longer able to rake leaves; it was he who found my mother in time. From the hospital, Dad somehow managed to telephone me in Washington; like a child, he asked, "Where is everybody?"

Mom survived the surgery but not as the person we knew, and so she was the first to be institutionalized. My brothers and I found another nursing home for Dad just blocks from the corner where he met me that wet November. The night before we moved him we all got a little drunk—I, my brothers, Frank and Dan, my nephew, Danny, and of course Dad.

Too much has been written about whiskey in the South. It was often talked about when I was growing up and utilized at odd moments. Frank once heard our uncle, in the alcoholic blush of Christmas Eve, cradling fifths of his two favorite bourbons, proclaim to all present, "These are the standards!" The idea was that good things followed if you knew what and how to drink, and kept in practice. Dad would travel with a quart of sour mash, and he kept one in the desk drawer at his office and another in the cabinet above the refrigerator. I often saw him extract and uncork it on a tedious afternoon, an act that required neither apology nor explanation. Boys going off for the first time to Ole Miss or U.T. or Chapel Hill took with them an intimate knowledge of the mysteries of drink and were known for it.

This time alcohol undeniably served a purpose beyond the reach of sentiment or drugs. Dad's drinking had been severely curtailed, and now, as we sat around the kitchen table and he sipped some wine, an amazing thing happened: He shed, however briefly, the lost look of the terminally deranged and put on the old, sweet insouciance of the perennial party boy. He no longer knew our names but he did know that he belonged to us, and he teased, and cussed a bit, and even threw—gingerly—a piece of cutlery. Boys, even three generations of them together, were supposed to be cutups, a bit dangerous but adorable. He had been viewed that way as a child, and by my mother too, despite their differences; and in this brief, boozy epiphany I glimpsed all that had been bundled down to me and my brothers and our children, and wondered what place on the planet could possibly replicate such a curious blend of love and delusion.

We hung my mother's oils on the wall of his room at Bright Glade. One painting was of the house outside Tucson where my parents had spent a glorious year in the Thirties, but Dad was not happy with his new digs. The day after we left him we received a call from the director, saying that Dad had attempted to walk out and, when detained, threatened to strike the attendant. I inferred that he had also used the racial epithet once so common in Memphis, and I went out and lectured Dad, who listened in perplexity, sitting in the stuffed chair we had hauled over from the house. I feared the staff would lose patience and neglect him, but I was wrong. In my fumbling attempt to apologize for my father I must have lost my composure, and I remember a large black woman taking my hand sympathetically, as if I were the patient, and all this discord was transitory and ultimately insignificant.

I saw him only a few times after that, sitting in the foyer of the nursing home, where America's actuarial bias lay starkly exposed. Except for Dad and one other man, the many patients were women, in wheelchairs, facing the door like a school of steelhead watching for the river to rise. Dad almost always slept. First they fed him with a spoon and then with a big plastic syringe. He continued to shrink. When awake, his eyes danced desperately. Pushing him along the outdoor walkway, I saw him attempt to follow the flight of a jay and imagined him living with a relentless mental strobe, each flickering image bearing no relation to what preceded or followed it. He died a year after he went in, Dan holding a hand grown thin and dry as cardboard.

His will was an old one, scribbled on graph paper. Dad had requested cremation and the spreading of his ashes on the surface of the Mississippi River, at a point of our choosing. We were told by the Coast Guard that this was not permissible but decided to do it anyway; one bleak spring day the three of us boarded a houseboat piloted by my brother's neighbor and set out from the marina on Mud Island, at the foot of the city, with a small metal can that had a snap-on plastic lid. Dad's name was typed on a piece of paper taped to the lid. What he'd hoped for, I think, was accord among the three of us, and maybe even some festivity. I had bought a half-pint of Jim Beam but left it under the car seat.

We headed upstream. In another month the river would rise above the levee on the Arkansas bank and spread away like an inland, caramel-colored sea. A strong current rode up the stone buttresses beneath new, arching spans; we felt the tug of that dark water.

Our pilot said, "Be sure the wind's behind you."

We removed the lid and sprinkled ashes in turn, starting with my older brother. Dan sank the tin; I tossed the lid, which floated my father's name briefly beneath the eye of the world before slipping under.

A month later I dreamed of a man walking with assurance along an empty airport corridor carrying a hanging bag. It was Dad, thirty years younger, his hair thick on the sides, deep chestnut in color; his lean, muscular arms protruded from the rolled sleeves of his shirt with the old-fashioned wing-tip collars. I was surprised to see him there because he did not like to fly—flying is expensive and tends to take you to places where you would just as soon not be—and yet he was off, waving,

through a dim, untended portal.

A year later I dreamed of a distant city I wanted to leave, to get to a place where I had left something of significance. My inquiries, made to a faceless person behind a cash register, elicited no response. Across the street sat a station wagon, red in the streaking rain; a clipboard on the seat suggested scheduling, imminent departure. A man sat in the passenger seat. "Dad," I said, and he turned and smiled, the polished rims of his spectacles gathering the light. His gray beard was trimmed to fit the squarish contours of his jaw, and he wore the tan raincoat I knew so well. He said, "Get in, son," with the friendly authority of a man who knows where he, where *we*, are going and is happy to provide deliverance and good company. ■

June Index Sources

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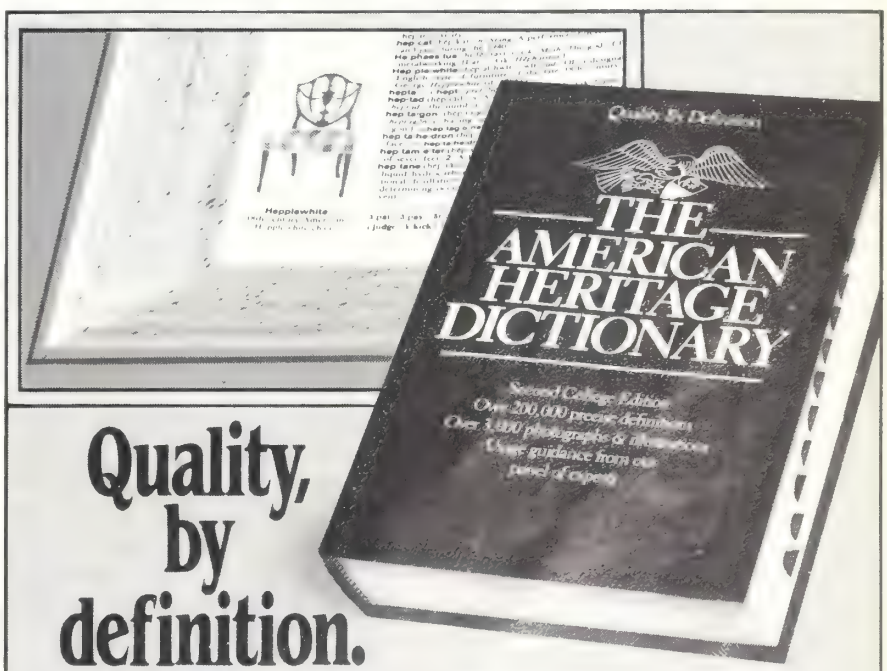
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OCTOPUS

By Charis W. Conn

What he did was weep. With a convulsive, shredded sound, as if fabric were being rent or animals slaughtered. He was so small that his most solemn sorrowful sounds were still very high, like shrieking, but colored with more than shrillness. He sounded as if he were being physically pierced, a frozen wind whistling through his most tender inner parts. I would lie in my room in the early twilight, convinced that my father was beating him, wishing that my father were beating him, that it was simple like that.

His room was painted a series of encouraging colors: yellow in infancy, pale blue a little later, and something slightly warmer than apple green toward the end of our time there. His shelves were stuffed with bright toys he never touched. He preferred sticks he'd found in the backyard or his treasured "jar of air," which he had labeled carefully and delighted in showing anyone who might understand. He could play for hours with two stones.

We had a large, enviable backyard, with swings and monkey bars, a small pool, and many trees. And our mother was rare and notorious in the neighborhood for her complete disinterest in what children did there. On days when Simon was taking temporary refuge from their bullying, the local children would congregate outside his alley window and shriek his name up at him in a garish parody of neighborhood chums calling for a friend to come out and play. They usually did this just well enough to make Simon feel foolish for ignoring them, and just loud and long enough so that no matter what his state of mind he always had to relent and let them into the yard. I remember the misery of his shuffle as he descended the stairs and made his way to the back door, my father reminding him softly that he didn't have to let them in, and Simon's heavy sigh as he shook his head and continued out into the yard, to the back gate, where they were already clamoring. As he opened it, he was almost knocked down by the swarming children, and for the rest of the day he sat alone on a stump in the middle of it all, his head cocked to one side, the middle and fourth fingers of his right hand in his mouth, his light eyes milky and far away. It was safe for him to stay there because it was understood that while they gloried in the abundance of his possessions, it would be impolitic for the children to abuse him. But sometimes he could not stand to be the recipient of this kind of tolerance and retreated to his room again, where the joyful howls of the children enjoying his yard poured in through his windows until he called for me to close them.

My window faced the front, and each year on the last evenings of summer, beyond the darkening crowns of the trees across the street, I could see the bright, jeweled tiara of a Ferris wheel. At dusk, in the hush that followed the swish of a bus pulling away from the curb, faint brassy music accompanied the arrival and departure of every glowing, empty seat at the top of the wheel. And I knew that when real darkness fell, everything would begin. Soon, I imagined, I would be rising to the top, near the stars, and slipping into the edge between the candy-lit haze of the carnival and the infinite soft black of the sky.

The last time I went to the fair was the first time I went without my parents. In the gentle beginning of that evening, I was eleven years old, weighted down with loose change and the wonderful prospect of being my own sole representative to the world, with no taller ambassadors, no warnings, and nothing to separate me from the night.

Through air still scented with a delicious dinner no one had enjoyed, I could hear my brother crying in his room. It had started over something spilled, and now someone would have to go in there and find out what it was really about. During the school year, he would often come home in the afternoon and remain completely silent for hours, until some small object slipped from his fingers and broke, or rolled with a lonely rattle across the floor, or simply slid out of sight. His body would become rigid, his face freeze and crumple, and the bottomless sound would pour out of him.

Simon wept. And, gradually, a story would emerge. His gasped answers and mute shakes or nods of the head spelled out the precise paragraphs of his sentence that day:

Charis W. Conn is an associate editor of Harper's Magazine. *His first novel,* Through the Green Fuse, *will be published next year by Pantheon.*

Someone had tripped him at school, someone had caused a group of other students to laugh at him, someone had grabbed his books and hidden them, someone had spoken too fast for him to understand or so slowly he had felt humiliated. His work—the simplest of spelling it was then, the addition of twos and threes—had been wrong or badly done or lost or stolen. And if it was not, if it had been right and praised, he felt he was being patronized, for he knew, even at seven, that three-letter words and single-digit addition were the easiest tasks he would ever be asked to perform; that other children (*all* other children, he tended to insist) found these things remarkably simple, as they did



opening their milk cartons or playing games or somehow believing themselves to be worthy of anything at all.

Simon wept. And into his weeping that night of the fair came the sound of the telephone, clashing insistently with his voice. After it was answered—mid-bleat, almost in deference to him—he quieted. His wailing became staggered—choked breathing alternating with small sobs. He was tired enough now to be curious, I guessed.

My mother placed her knuckles briefly against my door and came in to say that it was Miriam on the phone, that she wanted to know when we would leave and what she should wear. My mother smiled when she said this, amused by the fact that Miriam and I talked on the phone so much, even though we lived only five houses apart.

I spent as many evenings as I could at Miriam's, where she and her sister and brother lived together in a slope-walled attic their parents never entered. In their three rooms was everything we needed, and we would huddle up there all night sometimes, with music and television and magazines, lying on the floor playing Monopoly or draped across her brother's moldy couch while he told us dirty jokes.

I had been on my way there the week before when my father announced that I was now old enough to baby-sit Simon all by myself, and that I would be doing so that very night. He said this as if he were giving me a puppy. When I called Miriam with the news, she came up with the astonishing idea that my parents should extend this new appreciation of my maturity to the next logical step: allowing the two of us to attend the fair without them. And after chasing a giggling Simon through the house, satiating him with chocolate milk and stories, Miriam and I sat up until my parents' return at 2 A.M., planning next week's night out: the order of the rides we would go on, the food we would buy, deciding whose parents had the best cigarettes to snitch, wondering vaguely about beer, and inventing scenarios in which terrifying but gentle fourteen-year-old boys put their arms around us.

As I lay spread-eagled on my parents' bed, reaching for the inert receiver that was Miriam, my mother emitted a little blur of sound that climaxed with three words: "And take Simon." The last syllable was neatly timed to leave her mouth just as the phone reached my ear, so that I couldn't quite speak when I was supposed to. I listened instead to Miriam's patient breathing on the other end, to the sound of her sister's stereo playing in the background and the porcelain and stainless-steel music of her mother clearing the dinner dishes. Miriam lived in a very small house where everyone was always bumping into each other and no one ever minded. I often searched the faces of her family for disorder, some deep discord or pain, but I never found it. It was almost as if they were not a family but existed only when I experienced them and spent the rest of their time wrapped in tissue paper in a pretty box.

I listened to Miriam breathe a little longer into the phone and then let her know I was there.

"We have to take *him*," I said.

"Simon?"

"Yeah."

"Shit," said Miriam, succinctly.

"I know," I said, rolling my eyes at my mother, who was looking at me with the studied disappointment she adopted whenever I was complaining.

"Oh, well," said Miriam, suddenly resigned. And I wanted to tell her, Okay, Miriam, *you* calm him down when he gets anxious, *you* suffer the stares of people when he sucks his fingers or says something weird or is

Illustration by Russell O. Jones

[illegible] peculiar in ways I can [illegible]. But no one would [illegible] that Miriam was [illegible]ked to Simon anyway. They could tell it was me every time.

After I hung up, I was instructed not to let Simon's hand leave mine that night. He was seven, looked five, and had fragile, almost visible bones that suggested fractures. He had a habit of paying no attention whatsoever—"tuning out," we called it. Once, when my family was eating dinner at Miriam's, Simon did it at the table, and my mother said, right in front of everybody, "Simon, honey, you're tuned out." Miriam's sister laughed, but her parents' faces became rounder and sweeter and I hated them.

I had to watch him, my mother said, or he would walk into the gears of the Tilt-a-Whirl, get tangled up in people's legs, or step in front of a moving car somewhere in the six blocks of avenue between our house and the fair.

We waited for Miriam on the front porch. Night had fallen, and the air was sweet and motionless. My mother slipped a card into the breast pocket of Simon's overalls, saw me watching her, and whipped it out again, wagging it at me.

"This is his name and our address and telephone number," she said, then tucked the card back into his pocket while he stood facing the front yard, his fingers in his mouth, looking peaceful. He had cried for three hours that evening. I had timed it. His body was now pliant and limp, his eyes alert and empty. I knew he was thrilled to be going. His face was always transparent to me, though I had learned from Miriam—and even from my parents—that other people did not find him so easy to read. I could tell from the *way* he sucked his fingers how he felt at any given moment. I could tell by the shade of blue his eyes became how things would go.

Far off, I could hear Miriam's screen door slam, then her clogs on the slate sidewalk, getting closer. Soon, we could see her head bobbing between the rows of hedges. As she passed each street lamp, her bright hair gave off a coppery glow.

"Look, Simon, there's Miriam," said my mother to the side of his passive face. He did not change his position. Only his eyes flitted sideways, watching her progress without moving a muscle. With his eyes straining in one direction and his upper lip clamped down over his fingers, he looked like a small animal, wary, poised for flight.

Miriam waved as she came into full view beside our driveway. She was wearing white pants and a yellow cotton undershirt. We all watched in silence as she crunched over the gravel to the walk.

"Doesn't she look nice?" my mother suddenly asked no one in particular. I heard my brother exhale noisily through his nose.

She said hello to Simon first, in a cheerful voice even I found patronizing. She tried to give him a poke, but he elegantly eluded her hand, without taking his fingers out of his mouth. She scolded him brightly and then made small talk with my mother. Somehow the presence of Simon that night brought out her dullest Catholic-school side, making her wholesome and pleasant rather than wonderfully warped and resourceful and essentially naughty, as I preferred her to be.

I took Simon's hand. He let it slip like a fish from my palm. I looked at my mother. She put his hand back in mine, instructing him in whispers. He grimaced and allowed me to drag him down the steps and onto the sidewalk.

By the time we had walked the two blocks to the A & P and the avenue, Miriam was ten steps ahead of us. She was the youngest in her family and never had to contemplate bodies smaller than her own. Simon hung on my hand like dead weight. I knew that any joy he might have felt before was now suffused with terror. It was just a matter of time before he broke into tears. Something in the window of the toy store on the way might upset him, or he might remember that the last time we went to the hardware store he brushed against a bin of screws and sent them crashing to the floor in the middle of a Saturday afternoon.

When Miriam crossed the street, Simon and I did not—my last-minute effort to keep the hardware store as far away as possible. We walked like that, ridiculously, for several blocks: Miriam on the north side of the avenue and Simon and I on the south; Miriam throwing me questioning looks and gestures, me keeping my head down, pretending to be terribly interested in the stores on our side of the street. But Simon was hardly looking at anything. He had lapsed back into a bland, blind neutrality. I guessed he had come to the conclusion that this patch of avenue was not unfamiliar, that he was not undertaking a journey that was terribly dangerous after all.

We joined Miriam at the corner, where the crowds spilled into the street. The fair was held in the large parking lot of St. Mary's School, across the street from Miriam's church. Religious schools puzzled me. They seemed regimented and impersonal. Simon and I had always attended our own peculiar little private schools for reasons much more concrete than religion: Simon because he was so much trouble, and me because I was so smart.

Simon had told me on several occasions that he hated me. Not lightly, not because he was cranky or jealous in the usual ways I had seen other children be. He told me through the thick sobs of his worst depressions, when I was supposed to be making him feel better. I attempted this sometimes by admitting I had felt the same things he was feeling. This was always a terrible mistake. It sent him into an almost physical rage in which he howled at me that I couldn't say that, that nothing I felt was the same, that I was *perfect*. It was a word he used frequently, even at seven. He used it like a knife.

But it helped to be perfect at times like this, with the bulb-studded skeletons of carnival rides looming up into the air before us, with walls of strangers laughing too loudly all around us. It helped to have his hand in mine and to let him think I could navigate all of it,

that I could protect him from anything. I felt him slowing down as the three of us immersed ourselves in the simmering crowds. We were surrounded with blinking lights and washes of color, by the hypnotic odors of sugar and salt and a thousand voices filled with delight and urgency and mock terror.

There were already children crying, even this early in the evening: children who had gone on rides that scared them, children who had been sick, children who had temporarily lost their parents, children who had been cuffed for dawdling or for dropping their drink. Children in our neighborhood were hit at a moment's notice: hit for using the wrong tone of voice, hit for laughing. Simon couldn't bear violence of any sort, even in Saturday-morning cartoons. He found the Three Stooges extremely troubling, which no one outside our family could understand or even take seriously. It worried me that I lived in a world populated by people like that: who couldn't understand the simplest things about Simon, who couldn't understand him even when he was making more sense than they were.

Miriam was unhelpfully weaving through the maze of people before us. Simon had become dead weight again. By now I was dragging him by the wrist, his small limp hand dangling from my fist like a wet handkerchief. We were heading for the Ferris wheel when he came to a full stop, yanking my arm backward. My voice, alerting Miriam, sounded shrill and puny in the enormous din.

"*Jesus*, Simon," I said to the sky, as if he wasn't there, realizing too late that I was terribly angry, that I looked and sounded terribly angry, that I had tightened my grip on his wrist, and that I was hurting him. When I turned, I saw that he was shouting up at me, barely audible. His face seemed to squirm from within a pit beneath the taller bodies all around us. The swirling lights hit everyone in the face but left Simon in the darkness down where he stood. I couldn't even see his sneakers.

I knelt down into the dimness with him. He was saying that he

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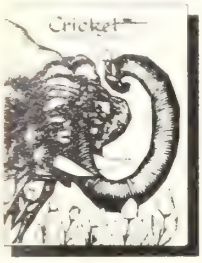
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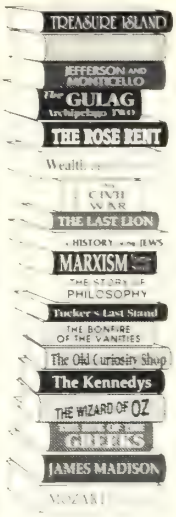
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didn't want to hold my hand. I told him he had to. He began to cry. I straightened up, spotted Miriam, and shuffled a few feet toward her with Simon wedged in front of me, my hand on his head. Miriam was standing in a little clearing of space, her arms folded, her face tipped to the sky, and her green eyes electric in the lights.

I asked Simon if he wanted to go on the Ferris wheel and he nodded. Standing in line was a relief, as we were fenced in and Simon couldn't wander, but he wanted to *sit* in line, scooting along on his rump each time we moved. He sat staring like a convict through the aluminum bars of the fencing. I couldn't take my eyes off him, even though this was my only chance to do so.

The tattooed man who buckled us in seemed apprehensive.

"How old you say he was?"

"Seven."

The man rolled his eyes and shrugged.

"Honey, you hold onto him, 'cause if you don't, he's gonna fall right out."

I nodded silently, wishing Simon didn't have to hear this, knowing he cared less about falling than about the fact that he had been spotted as different and inadequate. I sat with him clamped to my waist, my arm encircling him like steel, too tightly probably. But Simon was sucking his fingers almost contentedly now. It was astonishing how limply his body responded to each pitch forward into the cool air. He simply hung on my arm as if he had no inkling I could release or lose him. In the moments in which we were practically facing the earth—when our car had been set rocking by a particularly furious spin of a gear somewhere below—I could feel him slipping toward the gaping empty space between the seat and the safety bar, slipping toward the ground and the small figures that inhabited it, slipping away from me and making no effort not to do so, knowing I would hold him.

"Look at the lights," Miriam said to him. "Look at the cars down there."

I winced at her over his head

until she caught sight of me and stopped suggesting views. In this, at least, he didn't need instruction.

At the very top, we paused for a long time and pondered every Ferris wheel rider's nightmare: getting stuck. But it was not a nightmare to me. I had always wanted to get stuck at the top of the Ferris wheel: to be unreachable and close to the sky, to be unable to do anything about anything, to gently rock and wait while crowds appeared, while my parents arrived and did all the worrying.

When we returned to earth, Simon had to go to the bathroom—an entire category of trouble I had not even anticipated. We plowed through the crowds to the back of the lot, where two open doors threw parallelograms of warm light onto the pavement. Simon didn't want to enter alone. I explained to him that there was no alternative. Miriam offered to take him into the ladies' room, and the horror of this propelled him into the men's. I watched him disappear through the door and around the bend, his shaky reflection on the tiles following him like a shadow. We turned from the bathrooms and took our first unimpeded look at the fair.

From there, with a little breathing space around us, the people looked cheerful, harmless. Their faces glowed with a hundred tender dramas; their arms were filled with stuffed animals they had won, with small children and luminous clouds of cotton candy. We rushed to get some before Simon returned. As we ran across the asphalt, Miriam handed me big cool fistfuls of dimes and nickels and quarters. Coins fell from our pockets, from between our fingers, from everywhere, hitting the ground with small explosions, and we laughed, spinning around to find them all, doubled up, first with the searching and then with the silliness of it, giggling pointlessly, then laughing harder as we caught people watching.

By the time we had picked up all the change, gotten to the stand, received our mounds of pink spun sugar, and settled onto a bench within view of the bathroom doors, there was a curious, small weight in

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NOTES FOR "JIGSAW"

DOWN: A. AS-ROD reversed; CRE(W)EL; B. I'D-(Y)L; E-PAR(CH)Y, anagram of "pray," & lit; C. U(nit)-FANS reversed; INTAC(anagram)-T; D. C(hocolate)-O-IN; MA(CAD)AM; E. ROT-A; BLOATER, anagram; F. BATS, two meanings; SYNO(NY)M, anagram; G. P(. . .E. . .)ACE; TOM TOM reversed; H. COB-RA(t); S(alome)-MARTY(r); I. A-TOLL; BECAL (anagram)-M(tv); J. BE(r)RY-L; (r)ANKLES; K. SOME, "sum"; TSUNAMI,, hidden. JIGSAW PIECES: 1. N-UBS (anagram), 2. YE(l)PS; 3. TE(a)R(o-o)M; 4. PEAS(ant); 5. DISCO, hidden; 6. H(auled)-EWER; 7. (o)RALLY; 8. LE-MON; 9. AMEBAS, hidden; 10. DA(CT)YL, anagram; 11. I(MARE)T; 12. DORY-L-F(ish) reversed; 13. STOMATA, hidden; 14. CRANI-UM(e), anagram; 15. CAM(reversal)-LETS; 16. CA(N)TORS, anagram; 17. O-NET-RACK; 18. CAT-A-COMB (anagram); 19. A-L(BAN-I)AN(d); 20. LOB-O(re)-TO-MY.

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Israel and the Media

Are current events in Israel getting fair coverage?

In December of 1987, an Israeli civilian was stabbed by Arabs in the Gaza territory, administered by Israel. On the following day, four Gaza Arabs were killed by an automobile driven by an Israeli. The two events were totally unrelated. Yet, the rumor spread that the Arab deaths were revenge murders by the Israelis. Rioting broke out and spread into Judea-Sumaria (the "West Bank"), also administered by Israel. It was the beginning of the "intifada," which still goes on. The media have covered and continue to cover this uprising extensively. Are they doing it fairly?

What are the facts?

■ The conflict between the Israeli government and the Arabs in the areas administered by Israel, the so-called "intifada," is essentially a minor regional one. It does not compare in scope, in violence and in the number of people killed or injured to the many other conflicts going on in the world right at this time, such as the conflict between the Basques and Spain; between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland; and between Moslems, Hindus and Sikhs in India. And there are many more. Just as with the Arab-Israel conflict, no easy or early solution seems at hand.

■ Yet, while the "intifada" is only one of many regional conflicts, the volume of its coverage in the media has made it appear to be a major world event. There are over 250 press and t.v. reporters accredited in Israel, a tiny country the size of New Jersey and with only half the population of New Jersey. This large media contingent is second only in number to that of Washington and Moscow—and less than that of such key news centers as London, Paris, Bonn, New Delhi, Peking or Tokyo. Naturally, all of these reporters must produce daily stories in order to justify their presence. This results in much journalistic overkill. *The Washington Post*, for instance, reports in an internal audit that . . .during a 5-month period in 1988, they published over 300,000 words on the "intifada," more than two articles daily, one-quarter of which appeared on the front page. That was the most intense coverage by the *Post* of any continuing story. In contrast, when in one day, 65 Shi'ites were killed in one of the brotherly battles in neighboring Lebanon, the *Post* gave that only 600 words, in an article on page 15.

■ But it isn't just the intensity of coverage that casts serious doubt about the fairness of the media. It's primarily the slant that is being given to the news, both in the print media and on television. Television, especially, thrives on "action bites," short dramatic scenes with potential to get the viewer involved. For instance, we see over and over again pictures of teenage boys throwing rocks at Israel soldiers, and the soldiers chasing those teenagers with guns and clubs. That inevitably creates the impression of Israel as the bully or the Goliath, and of the "Palestinians" as defenseless Davids. The opposite is true, of course. Israel is a beleaguered country surrounded by implacable enemies, who incessantly plot its destruction. The "intifada" is part of that never-ending war.

■ The media do not show the hundreds of Israeli soldiers and civilians who have been grievously wounded and in some cases killed by rocks and gasoline bombs. They do not show the Arabs setting countless arson fires, in which over 25,000 acres of forest—every tree having lovingly been planted by hand—have been destroyed. They do not show the attacks on Jewish farms, the wanton destruction of industrial and public service facilities, the fire bombing of hundreds of buses, and the ruthless killing of livestock. They do not show the PLO terror aimed at the "Palestinians" themselves. In the last seventeen months of the "intifada" dozens of Palestinian Arabs have been murdered by the PLO, hundreds injured, many critically. This campaign of intimidation has increased since Yasir Arafat allegedly renounced terrorism.

■ In the few cases in which fuller coverage of the conflict was attempted on t.v., such coverage usually did turn out to be more "show-biz" than serious reporting. ABC's reportage "Six Days Plus Twenty Years" was so blatantly anti-Israel in tone that Arab countries rushed to use it as a propaganda film. Peter Jennings on ABC insistently perpetuates the odious comparison of Israel with South Africa. T.V. interviews with people in the territories invariably show reasonably middle class intellectuals and professionals with whom the American viewer can identify—never the arsonists, the bus bombers and the throwers of Molotov cocktails. The occasional Israeli spokesman that gets trotted out is almost always a member of the radical left or of the so-called "Peace Now" movement, quite unrepresentative of mainline Israeli thinking.

The media do not give the "intifada" fair coverage. It's partly the sheer volume of the coverage, which gives this minor regional conflict perceived importance that it doesn't have. It also lies in the persistent anti-Israel slant that permeates the reporting in all media. Finally, the media, almost without exception, focus on the immediate "drama" and do not explore the history and background of this conflict. The most important point, always omitted, is that the conflict between Israel and the "Palestinians" is not the core problem in the area. The core problem is the unremitting obsession of the Arab states to destroy Israel, their refusal to make peace with it, or to lift the economic boycott against Israel—regardless of what disposition may ultimately be made of the "West Bank." Israel, more even than other beleaguered pro-Western nations, is the target of disinformation and unfair reporting. Largely because it is a dependable friend and ally of the United States, the Jewish state is another victim of the "blame America first" bias in the media.

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my stomach. The doors, unchanged, did not look right to me. We ate our cotton candy and watched strangers go in and out of the rest rooms.

"Where *is* he?" said Miriam finally, clearly annoyed.

I got up and took a step in the direction of the yellow doorway, then stopped. It was the men's room, after all, and it was suddenly ludicrous to me that my tiny brother could gain admittance to a room he didn't even want to go into in the first place, and that I could not, no matter how much I needed to now.

"This is an emergency," I told Miriam, hearing my voice and hating the sound of it.

"Oh, it is not."

"What is it then?"

"Oh, he probably just wet himself or something."

"Fuck you, Miriam."

"Just wait here, I'll be back," she said softly, and strode off alone toward the rest rooms. It seemed impossible that she was offering to go in my place. I stood there, frozen to the spot, as she neared a man who was approaching the door, spoke to him briefly, pointing in my direction, and then nodded thank you and retreated back to me.

"You didn't have to say it was *my* brother."

She rolled her eyes, something my mother always said that Miriam had picked up from me. "An unattractive gesture," my mother called it.

We waited. The man returned, spotted Miriam, and walked over with a painful slowness. He was probably in his twenties, skinny and smiling. Smiling at Miriam.

"I'm sorry," he said, clearly not sorry at all. "Simon's not in there."

Miriam thanked him again, smiling back and giving a little concluding nod. But the man didn't budge. Instead, he lifted his eyebrows in a "that's life" sort of way and shoved his hands into his pockets.

"Thanks," I mumbled, taking Miriam's arm and moving us quickly away. She looked back over her shoulder, and I slapped at her wrist.

"You didn't have to tell him his *name*."

"He had to call for him. What was

he gonna do, stick his head under all the stalls?"

And the idea of a strange man calling for Simon in an echoing public toilet filled my heart with the sudden realization that I had lost him. He was gone and I had taken us away from the last place he had been seen. I had done something stupid, exactly what my mother feared. I thought of the flimsy slip of paper in the gaping pocket of his pale blue overalls, of his thin shoulders, and of the way his sunken chest always collected a puddle of water when he lay down in the bathtub. His skin was skim milk, and when he was frightened even that hint of blue fled, leaving his face completely bloodless, his eyes like gelatin. Wherever he was, he was frightened right now.

I must have been shouting at Miriam. She led me back to the bathrooms, and we searched along the edge of the building, scrutinizing each shadow, each knot of people loitering anywhere nearby. Beyond the black hulk of the garbage bins near the back of the school, the tips of two cigarettes glowed like eyes.

"We have to tell somebody," Miriam decided, and I realized that I had gone slightly limp and no longer had anything to say. I simply let her lead me around while she made her inquiries. Finally, we stopped beneath a zigzag riot of light called the Octopus, a ride I had always loved. Miriam pushed me gently onto the end of the long line and talked to me slowly, with a hand on each of my shoulders, looking into my face as if I were a baby. She said she had to go to the other side of the school building to see the lost-and-found lady. I wanted to tell her that Simon was not a glove or a handbag, but she was gone by the time my lips had formed the words, her long hair shimmering down her back as she disappeared beyond a brick wall.

The Octopus loomed before and above me, enormous and curving and terribly fast. I had ridden it dozens of times, strapped into a little pod at the end of one of eight long snaky metal arms, careening around at high speeds, getting yanked in every direction at once to the accompaniment of my own screams mingled with the screams of others, and loud music, and lights that smeared with motion into long fingers of color. It felt like flying and falling at the same time. It felt wonderful.

The first time I went on the Octopus, we were living in an apartment in the city. I was four, alone for the evening with my mother. She took me down some small winding streets until we came upon one closed off to traffic, alive with this same jittery glitter, like a chip of some bright world dropped here into the dimness. We wandered, hand in hand, past stalls sputtering with grease and laughter, until, at the end of it all, I could see something astonishing through the legs and elbows of the crowd: a whirl of streaming lights, spinning through the air, carrying faces squeezed with a mixture of terror and joy, their screams echoing off the facades of the dark buildings that rose all around us. We stood silently, watching it, until the thing stopped, and I saw that the people on it were being replaced by other people. I looked up at my mother hungrily.

"You actually want to go on that thing?" she asked with horror.

I nodded.

"It'll make you sick."

I shook my head.

"I'd have to go with you," she said, uncertainly.

That seemed reasonable to me. I nodded.

She paused. I could not read my mother's face at that moment. Something played across her brow that I had never seen before, a terrible indecision.

"I won't be scared," I promised.

But this didn't do the trick. My mother seemed to be considering something of her own, something she had to weigh in a manner that didn't include me. So I simply stared up at her, knowing, as all small children do, that my upturned, eager face alone was often my best argument.

It worked. She looked at me once, then faced the ride, nodded to herself, and led me by the hand up to a small white booth lit from within. The red deckle-edged ticket she pressed in my hand felt stiff and magical. I clutched it greedily while we waited in line, and handed it to the fat man at the gate with an air of importance.

I was not scared. Not in a way I regretted afterward. The ride thrilled me as carousels and slides never had. My mother screamed and grinned and grimaced along with me, and afterward she wobbled only slightly once our feet hit the pavement, and asked to sit down for a moment on the curb.

Later, she bought me an ice and took me home through the still, dark streets, up the stairs of our little building, and into the bright apartment where my father, home from working late, was sitting at the table eating what she'd left him. He seemed pleased that we had gone to the fair. But when I tried to tell him about the ride, my mother interrupted me.

I went to bed angry at her and lay in the darkness listening to the blur of voices in the next room, wondering why she had done it. As I was on the edge of sleep, her voice, now louder, woke me.

"Oh, it doesn't matter!" I heard her yell.

"It does matter!" shouted my father.

"Timothy, I'm only three months."

"You were only three months last time."

"That wasn't the same thing," I heard my mother say, more quietly now.

A chair scraped.

"Oh, it'll be fine," she said softly into the deepening silence. "It'll be just fine. I feel great. And it was so much fun, that ride. Like a dream."

I had been looking up into the Octopus for so long that I flinched when Miriam touched me. My neck throbbed when I tried to turn it, and I was blinded by the darkness of normal light. I stared at Miriam blankly while my pupils opened up.

Continued on page 78

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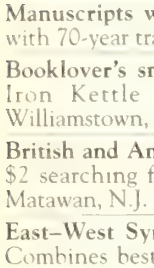
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Continued from page 75

"That's it," she shrugged matter-of-factly. "I told them he's lost."

I could barely remember what she was talking about. She had done whatever it was she had to do. There was nothing more to think about, and without discussing it, we moved up in line, nearing the emptying pods.

As I swung up into my seat, I pictured Simon trembling in the dark somewhere, a stranger approaching him, questioning him, confusing him, luring him somewhere. Then the machine yanked us up into the air at a steep angle, and the vision was gone, and I was consumed only with the giddy imbalance of my own body, with the unnatural and enthralling idea of being whipped through space faster than I knew how to go; of being unable to be prudent or careful or right; unable to stop, at last, what I did not wish to stop.

I was screaming suddenly through the night, my voice so loud it was no longer mine, no longer a voice at all. It was the sound that the air made as it went through me, as I became scrambled up with color and motion and music. I closed my eyes and there was nothing left but the invisible plumb of my heart waving crazily inside of me, betraying gravity again and again in enormous convulsive waves of joy.

When I opened my eyes, I could see the crowd below, smiling and pointing up at us, dreaming of being in these astonishing seats. Everyone below had been reduced to faces, small spots of changing color and shadow, dark pockets of eyes, flashes of teeth. Then Simon's.

He was standing in a circle of empty pavement out by the concession stands. The garish colors of the spinning lights washed over his pale face like nausea. His skin was slick, his mouth a jagged black hole that would not close. His tiny hands clawed at it as if there were something in there that could save him. He was looking right at me.

The Octopus screams still rolled through me, without my permission. But they were different screams now, clearly another color when they began in the dark near my heart but the same as any other rider's once they left my mouth. It was why I was up here, I suddenly understood, up here where screaming was expected and encouraged: so that I could make the sounds I needed to make, the sounds that Simon had stolen from me, my answer to the unreasonable universe that had turned my life into an appendage of his.

The ride slowed at last, and I wondered if I had somehow caused it to end prematurely. I searched the faces in the galaxy of pods that hung in the air all around me. I looked for disappointment, for resentment, for accusing glares. But every face was flushed with spellbound luminosity, as if each body had absorbed the brightness of the thousand bulbs of the Octopus, as if they had been permanently infused with air and motion until they glowed like water and sky, their lives lit from within by possibility.

My face felt slack and bloodless, exhausted from a screaming that did not temper horror with faith. I realized I had looked away from Simon. But he was still there, alone at the edge of the crowd, white as bone now and glistening with tears.

The couple below were getting unbuckled and helped out of their seat. Our pod dangled ten feet off the ground, waiting to descend to the exit platform. I undid my own buckle and swung the safety bar away. I didn't look at Miriam. I imagined that her impulse to protest was interrupted by whatever she might have seen in my eyes.

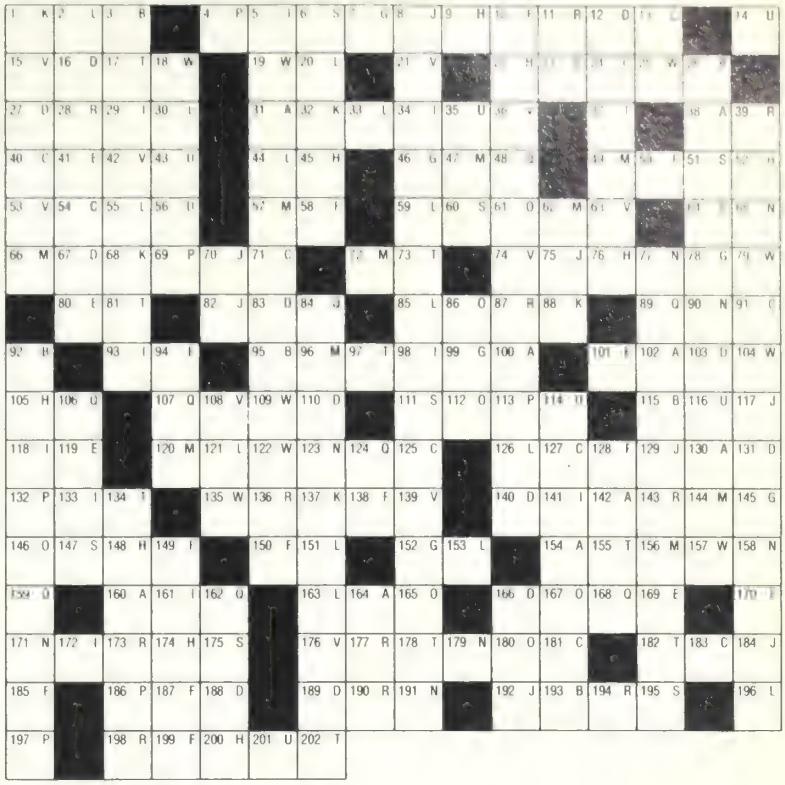
I jumped from my seat, landing in a four-point crouch on the pavement. And then I ran. Past the scolding attendant, past the curious faces of the families waiting in line, past teenagers entangled in dark corners, past mothers tugging children by the wrists, past fathers hoisting toddlers onto their shoulders, past the clatter of wheels of fortune and the whir of cotton-candy machines; hurtling through knots of strangers like a hunted animal, through summer, through night, through everything I was and have become, to him. ■

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 102

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 73.



CLUES — WORDS

A. Donald Malcolm Campbell's *Bluebird*, e.g.
38 130 154 164 100
31 102 160 142

B. Adjective for some windows and gasoline, e.g.
95 26 92 115 3
193

C. Shelley sonnet beginning, "I met a traveller . . ."
127 91 181 40 24
13 71 54 183
125

D. "The ____ have seen queer sights" (Service, "The Cremation of Sam McGee")
103 12 23 27 131 67 188 110
166 140 16 83 189 56

E. Gizzard or heart, perhaps
169 80 41 101 119 94

F. "Good-night, ____; good-night, good-night," says Ophelia (2 wds.)
10 50 138 185 58 170 199 149
150 187 128

G. Dealt with; paid the tab
46 7 99 64 152 78 145

H. Citation; dictionary or encyclopedia, perhaps
76 174 45 148 200 9 52 22
105

I. Delightful, bewitching
29 141 118 5 34 133 98 93
161 172

J. Involved by necessity or as a consequence
70 117 82 75 192 8 129 184

K. Twisting jerk
1 88 32 68 137

L. Sp. saint, poet, and mystic, a founder of the Discalced Carmelites (1542–91) (4 wds.)
126 196 2 30 153 59 151 163
55 33 121 44 85 20

M. Containing terse expressions of pithy wisdom
96 66 47 144 156 72 62 49
57 120

N. Type of airship
123 171 65 158 191 77 90 179

O. Time set for the beginning of an action (2 wds.)
180 159 61 167 86 112 146 165

P. The "Fordham Flash," who played infield for the Giants and Cardinals and managed the Cardinals
197 69 132 113 4 186

Q. Melted, thawed, yielded, bent
106 124 89 84 168 107 48 162

R. Proper spelling
194 143 11 28 87 173 177 136
198 190 39

S. Curative, therapeutic
111 51 175 69 147 6 195

T. Secretaries
17 182 37 81 155 134 73 97
178 202

U. Kettledrum
114 201 35 14 116 45

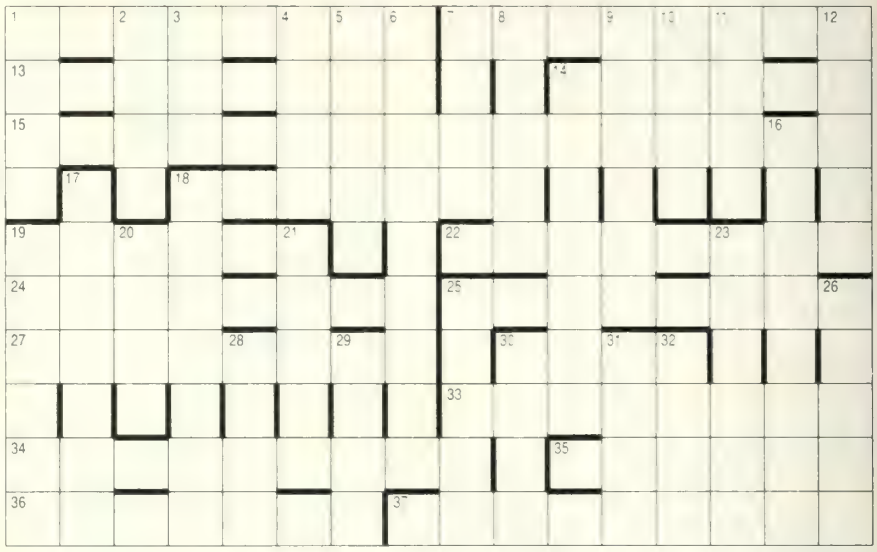
V. "Out of the abundance ____ the mouth speaketh" (3 wds., Matt. 12:34)
42 126 53 74 36 108 15 21
139 63

W. Seaport, SW Mindanao, the Philippines
122 79 135 157 109 18 104
19

PUZZLE

Burden of Proof

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.



Eleven of the clue answers must take on an additional burden—15 Across identifies it—in order to become diagram entries (which are also words).

Clue answers include two proper names; one of them is uncommon (23D). 25D isn't uncommon, but it isn't in Webster's Collegiate either. One of the thematic entries (36A) involves a brand name. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 73.

Across

1. Has dinner finished within seconds (4)
7. Husband returned, then left. Funny (5)
13. Love and vivacity cut short . . . that is wife, in summary (8)
14. African tribe beginning to mine gold more than once (6, *two words*)
15. *See Instructions (16, two words)*
18. Relaxed tensions and teed off about 10 (7)
19. Reddish-brown color—a mixture of rose with red and lake (6)
22. It's not quite sophisticated to flip over sheep (4)
24. Cold stew I fry has a little lobster? (8)
25. One is taken in by the French stories (4)
27. First-rate, glowing broadcast (5)
30. Joint where you see a lot of sailor (4)
33. Hint of rubeola found in labware. Infectious? (5)
34. Everybody gets backward name of French court dance (9)
35. Libertine embracing Latin and to get another shot . . . (6)
36. . . . heading off syphilis? Bull (2)
37. Force units to drive back, protecting army's rear (5)

Down

1. To a certain degree a piano gets flatter (4)
2. Hit with a bill for a large amount (4)
3. E.g., New York Giant punter, initially, or back (3)
4. In rainout, odd characters cause a rumpus (4)
5. Method of communication without letup at the start(5)
6. Piece of pottery partially completes her dinnerware (5)
7. Pipe that's bowed pronouncedly? (4)
8. Black snake runs around one spot (5)
9. Get up, for instance, one morning, and cope (6)
10. The usual routine with husband: remorse (4)
11. A stretch of phenomenal prognostication (4)
12. More than one string instrument spoils aurally (5)
14. Moron spilled methyl-containing chemical compound (7)
16. Rep Pan-American stocks (4)
17. Cross-examine about ring connected with a thug (7)
18. Doctor of divinity, embracing you, changed color (4)
19. Small crustacean swallowing a bug (6)
20. Distinctive poison copper's removed (4)
21. Brad raised a tropical plant (5)
23. A Spanish lady beginning to idolize Hebrew God (6)
25. Myrtle's Bud, losing head, has yen for tootsie (5)
26. People said to have flat bottoms (5)
28. To make a mess of getting married is stupid (4)
29. Wildcat well's finish upset *New York Times* (4)
30. Enroll soldiers given up by Navy (4)
31. Important times a seadog recalled without any trouble (4)
32. Last piece of equipment McCarver picked up! (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Burden of Proof," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the August issue. Winners of the April puzzle, "Single Occupancy," are Edward L. Devlin, New York, New York; Joseph DeRocco, Bridgewater, Massachussetts; and Hope E. Rhinestone, Chicago, Illinois.

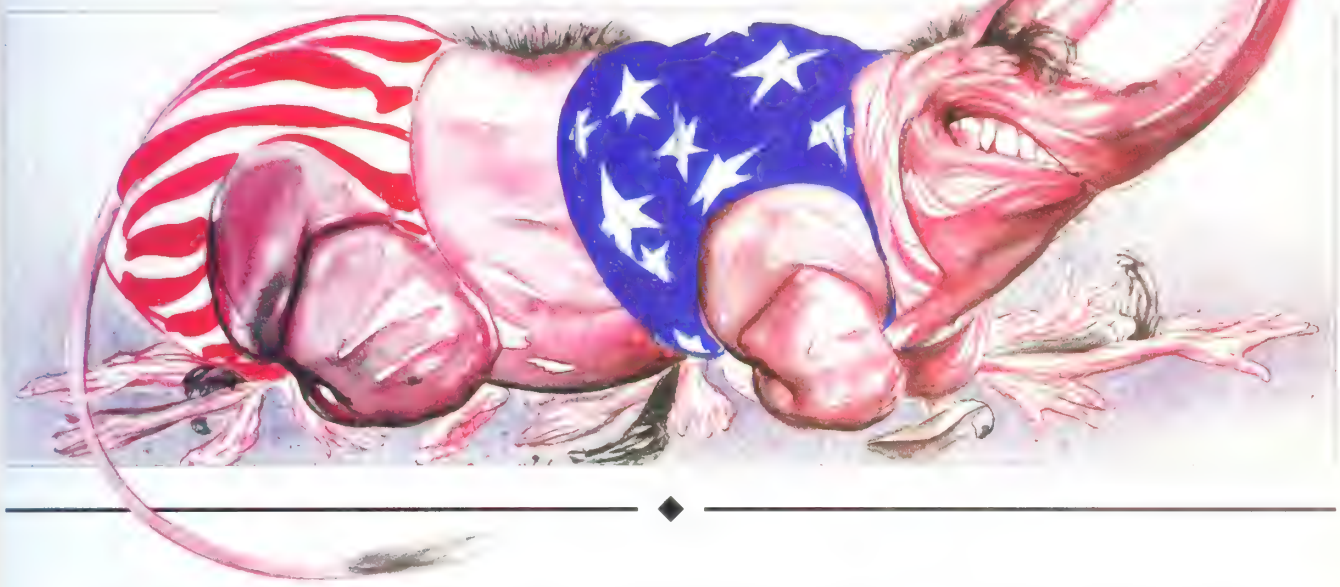
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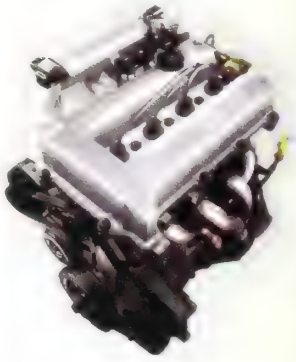
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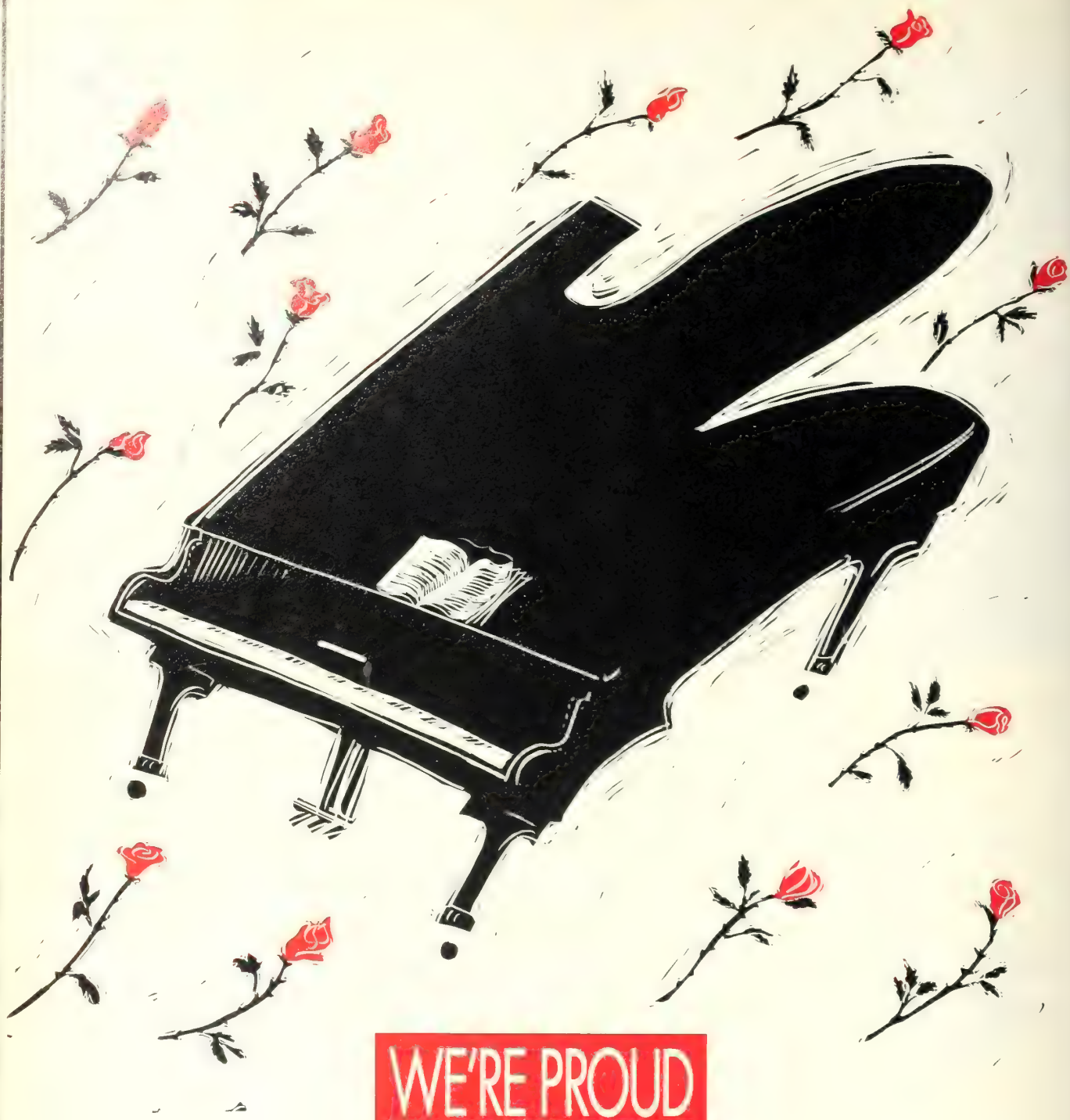
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Cover: Illustration by Steve Brodner

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LETTERS

Sexual Politics on Campus

Philip Weiss ["The Second Revolution: Sexual Politics on Campus," April] may believe that he has done a fair analysis of the serious issues of sexual harassment and abuse at Dartmouth College over the last few years, but he is caught painting caricatures of the individuals involved. The physical demeanor of student Jane Pfaff, a "sexual-abuse activist," is described as "doelike." Heather Earle, a psychologist and "sexual-awareness and sexual-harassment counselor," is described as a "Mary Poppins" type with "tousled" hair. And Kevin Acker, the Dartmouth man accused of sexual attacks on two women, is described as a "blunt man" of "thick build" like "Sluggo"—an inappropriate comic-book image in light of the seriousness of his alleged crimes.

I also question Weiss's characterization of the hearings of the Dartmouth Committee on Standards as having "pitted an immature young man against a very mature young woman." Is Weiss suggesting an unjust incongruity here? Does Kevin Acker's "immaturity" excuse his behavior? Furthermore, Weiss's suggestion that the current furor over sexual politics on campus may lead to a situation in which "hurt feelings" become a "legitimate cause for political and disciplinary action" is absolutely outrageous. Victims are not charging men with having "hurt their feelings"! They are charging men with unwanted physical advances and, ultimately, with having emotionally handicapped their ability to function free of fear and anxiety in their daily lives.

More surprising is that Weiss could agree with Kevin Acker's juvenile defense that the requirement of a "yes" from a woman for sexual advancement between two people is to insist upon a deadening choreography of sexual intimacy into distinct stages, each requiring a request and an approval. This inane argument trivializes the real issue: What constitutes sexual harassment and abuse, and how do we draw the line?

Yes, of course, there *is* a problem with "spelling out . . . a bright-line distinction between aggressive behavior and sexual abuse" on paper. The subtleties of intimacy between two people do defy semantics. But ask any woman to define sexual harassment and she will not tell you what she "thinks" it is; she will describe her own personal experience with it. And, certainly, any sober and psychologically stable man knows the difference between aggression and sexual abuse, and stops himself at the appropriate moment—before he becomes unwelcomely aggressive.

The judicial process that questions students' sexual conduct may warrant review, but the issue is not as ambiguous as Weiss suggests. There is no doubt that women's safety is at risk on campuses and that

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action must be taken. Vigilantism, as described in Weiss's article, is *not* the answer; it would be all too easy to make the wrong people victims of such tactics. But neither can a pervasive apathy be tolerated. Until women like Moore Robinson, one of the Dartmouth victims, are no longer forced to abandon or alter their dreams by changing schools, quitting jobs, or seeking psychiatric counseling simply in order to survive, let alone *thrive*, students must continue to press for all the community support they can get. It is astonishing that the editors of *Harper's Magazine* did not question Weiss's objectivity. Whether he intended it or not, his own sexism is glaringly apparent.

Patricia E. Carey
Williamsville, N.Y.

What is most offensive about Philip Weiss's "report" on the events that took place at Dartmouth College recently is that Weiss has turned the story into something more insidious than merely a subjective account (any account would be subjective). His opening paragraph asserts his clear position as the "I," the Voice: ". . . she's tentative and unreachable, while I feel big, clumsy, worried I'll say the wrong thing." Clearly, Weiss has entered the realm of personal narrative in this article, a grossly inappropriate device for discussing a series of events in which real people were hurt. Through tenuous connections and a penchant for near-sensationalism (masked in a "concerned," methodical morality), he manages to create a dubious, melodramatic account of the events that took place, reducing the people involved to caricatures. In going beyond literary license, Weiss discounts the real pain that many individuals experience.

Maybe "discounts" isn't quite the right word; after all, Weiss does discuss, as have other commentators ad nauseam, the unnecessary "disruption" to Kevin Acker's life. He was made the "convenient . . . villain," "demonized" by the community, especially members of REACT. What about the fact that this man



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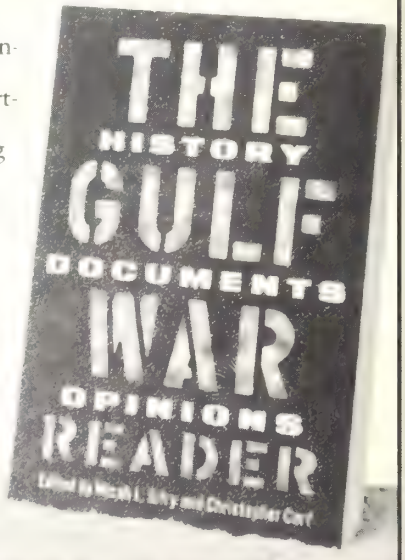
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was found guilty of harming another human being, of violating her body? Weiss's conclusion that Alma Lee, the Dartmouth woman attacked by Acker, could conceivably be a "winner" at the end of this affair is mind-boggling. His stale, sexist morality precludes any true compassion. Jeers to Weiss for his cheesy pedantry.

Lindsay F. Latimore
Hanover, N.H.

Editors' Note:
Lindsay Latimore is a member of REACT, a Dartmouth student-educational group that protests sexual abuse on campus. She is referred to in Philip Weiss's report.

I don't understand the decision by *Harper's Magazine* not to use the real name of the accuser, Alma Lee, because of her "desire for anonymity." Philip Weiss acknowledges that she has been identified in the press many times. Furthermore, Alma Lee made public accusations that were extremely damaging to the reputation of Kevin Acker. Dartmouth College accepted her version of the events, and Acker was punished. She *won*. It will be a long time before Acker's life returns to normal, and Alma Lee should have no qualms about that.

Nonetheless, Weiss argues that what happened in that Dartmouth bathroom three years ago is still a matter for debate. As he describes the situation, the case basically comes down to Alma Lee's word against Kevin Acker's. If Lee is telling the truth, she should have nothing to be afraid of. But if she distorted the truth and ruined Acker's college career, she should be held as accountable as he was.

Although he ambivalently describes Acker as a "convenient and irresistible villain," Weiss would not have seriously considered a sincere request from Acker not to use his name. Alma Lee's real name is also part of the public record. The author has no particular responsibility to protect her.

Janet Byron
Berkeley, Calif.

Allegations of sexual impropriety belong in the courts—out of the range of radical feminists, devotees of male machismo, and proponents of politically correct thinking. Protection is guaranteed to the accused by the rules of evidence and the application of the law.

In that setting, had Kevin Acker been proven guilty, Dartmouth College would have been within its rights to add its own strictures, such as suspension or expulsion.

Herb Greenhut
Bronx, N.Y.

There's a larger lesson to be learned from the sorry affair chronicled in Philip Weiss's "The Second Revolution." In the 1970s, many of the social codes governing campus behavior were relaxed, on the plausible grounds that college-age men and women were sufficiently mature to govern themselves and behave responsibly. It may be time to deem this experiment a failure: Students are simply too steeped in the all-pervasive American Fun Culture to act as they must if colleges and universities are to be places of rational inquiry and serious, engaged debate rather than glorified social clubs or year-round summer camps. It might be a bit draconian to reestablish single-sex dorms, strict noise limitations, curfews, limited parietal visitations, and an absolute ban on alcohol, parties, fraternities, and sororities. But if measures like these impress upon our youth that there's more to life than partying, and that their education is hard yet rewarding work that demands their unflagging attention, they may be steps worth taking.

Michael J. Quirk
Bellerose, N.Y.

Heather Earle and her REACT-ivists are angry people. Certainly, sexual-abuse incidents are painful and tragic. Unfortunately, the breast-beating hides examples of poor judgment (equally apportioned among all parties involved) and trivializes the trauma of sex-crime victims in the real world.

Rape is not a "communication" failure, a social blunder, or morning after remorse when Prince Charming has turned into a postcoital frog. It is a criminal offense. And there are enough existing difficulties in the successful prosecution of rape cases, particularly when date or acquaintance factors are involved, without diluting the seriousness of sexual violence through collegiate scavenger hunts for the crisis *du jour*. That no bona fide rape or instance of clearly uninvited sexual aggression was chronicled in the "demonizing" of Kevin Acker suggests, at some level, an alternative agenda. The symbolic castration speaks for itself.

Merry J. Whitney
Brookfield, Ill.

Philip Weiss sullies an otherwise intelligent report by suggesting that there might be some "charm" in men's practice of exposing their penis in public. While Weiss is willing to believe that this practice could be "a self-mocking comment on one's own sexuality," my fraternity brother friends have on more than one occasion boasted of doing this in barrooms for the express purpose of shocking and offending women. Needless to say, such a practice always gets the desired reaction.

Imagine a comparable situation, in which a woman exposes her breasts or genitals in public. Such an act would not be considered "performance art." No, in this case the woman would inevitably be harassed or raped. And if she had the audacity to complain or file charges, she'd be told that she "asked for it." That men can expose their genitals without danger while women cannot walk fully clothed without threat of harassment glaringly illustrates that the fuss women are (finally) making on the college campuses of this country is well justified.

Wendy Rawlings
Fort Collins, Colo.

Whenever women and men organize to protest rape, guys like Philip Weiss inevitably appear and philosophize about the ambiguities of courtship and the lack of a "bright line distinction between aggressive behavior and sexual abuse." But victims of assault such as Alma Lee aren't asking whether there's an *easy* answer to the problem of date rape: they just want to know if anyone cares enough about their pain to attempt a solution.

As it happens, there is a simple and effective way to defang the ambiguous nature of intimacy: Insist on explicit verbal consent between sex partners. There's nothing absurd about such a standard, especially in college, where students have a lot more exuberance than experience. Date rapists are nothing more exotic than "nice" boys like Kevin Acker who think they can read a woman's desire telepathically and, having done so, shut out all contrary signals. They have to be taught to use English instead of ESP. Given the

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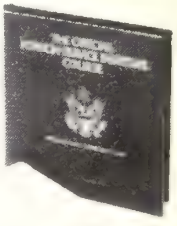
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complaining
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romance are we talking about
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Weiss, of course, is still preoccupied with noodling out the distinction between indecent exposure and performance art. All I can tell you, Phil, is that you'd better make sure you ask permission before you wag that thing in *my* direction.

Matt Ruff
Portland, Maine

The date-rape activists Philip Weiss describes seem to have gone the way of many revolutionaries: They have become a glorified lynch mob.

Defining a crime not by objective criteria but by the "feelings" of the accuser represents more than a epistemological shift; it opens the door to political extortion. As Weiss points out, most campus sexual encounters are, and will probably remain, ambiguous, based more on nonverbal communication than on an explicit "yes." If women are allowed to decide, after the fact, that they have been violated, they will be able to hold the threat of a rape charge over men in all such encounters.

It's time to recognize that sexual politics is, in fact, politics, and subject to the same dirty dealing as any other form of politics. False rape charges will represent no ethical hurdle to feminists who believe that all sex between men and women is a form of rape. Consent is not the ultimate issue; ideology is.

It is also clear why campus feminists would rather press their claim within the college framework than in the courts of law, which require such niceties as due process, confrontation by one's accuser, and the presumption of innocence—inconveniences that campus feminists would rather avoid. The denial of these basic rights allows women to convict men on little more than an accusation.

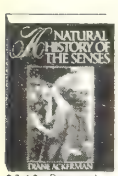
William R. Franklin
Ithaca, N.Y.

We have given our young people the means for sexual activity. Abortion is legal, condoms are everywhere, pamphlets on safe sex are handed out at freshman orientations. Women send their daughters off to college equipped with the basics: the Walkman, the phone, the mini-fridge, and the Pill. Yet in this same climate a male student is harangued for giving a hickey to a female student and suspended for an admittedly ambiguous encounter.

My heart breaks for the young woman who is truly a victim of rape. I share her hurt and outrage. But I am just as confused as the young men whose lives are turned upside down by the delayed reactions to their attempts at seduction. I don't condone their behavior, but I understand their confusion. In my day, as

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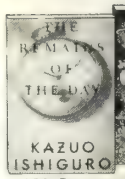
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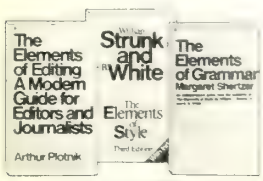


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Jean Frances Diemert
Acton, Mass.

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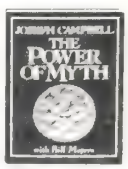


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NOTEBOOK

Achievement test

By Lewis H. Lapham

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—Robert Burton

No American schoolmaster ever outlined the lesson at hand quite as plainly as did Woodrow Wilson. At the turn of the new century, while he was still president of Princeton University, Wilson presented the Federation of High School Teachers with explicit instructions: "We want one class of persons to have a liberal education, and we want another class of persons, a very much larger class of necessity in every society, to forgo the privilege of a liberal education and fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks."

I came across Wilson's remark during the same month that President Bush announced yet another grand design for American education (one of possibly fifty such grand designs that I have heard announced by as many politicians over the past thirty years), and I was struck by both the constant and the variable. The pedagogical objective remains firmly in place, but the privileged classes have lost the courage to say what they mean. They continue to require the services of competent domestic labor (i.e., "decent help"), but they no longer write their own speeches, and their language has gone rotten with bureaucratic euphemism.

At a White House press conference on April 18, posed against the familiar backdrop of the American flag, Bush made a show of presenting new plans and initiatives that he described as "revolutionary." "For the sake of the future, of our children, and our nation," Bush said, "we must transform America's schools. The days of the status quo are over."

Maybe on an otherwise slow afternoon this summer at Kennebunkport, somebody will explain to Mr. Bush the meaning of the phrase "status quo." It is the ground and condition of his success as a politician, and if somehow it were to be abruptly removed (together with the helicopter, the applause, and the campaign contributions), I suspect he might find it hard to get work in any kind of new social order that placed a high value on disciplined thought or an advanced degree of literacy.

The President left the business of explaining the lesson plan to its author, Lamar Alexander, the newly appointed secretary of education and the man best known for his financial sleights of hand. As governor of Tennessee and, later, as president of the University of Tennessee, Alexander proved himself extraordinarily adept at the art of the miraculous windfall. In one series of stock transactions he earned $569,000 without investing so much as a cent; in another deal he and his wife paid $5,000 for stock that proved within four years to be worth $800,000. He worked similar wonders with Whittle Communications, Kentucky Fried Chicken, the *Knoxville Journal*, and various Tennessee banks. As a man obviously blessed with the entrepreneurial spirit of the age, Alexander approached the task of improving the nation's schools as if it were a problem in corporate management.

If the nation's intellectual infrastructure had fallen into as alarming a state of disrepair as its material infrastructure (i.e., if its collective mathematical and literary skills had been as poorly maintained as its bridges, ports, prisons, and roads), then what was needed was the stimulus of private enterprise. Operate the schools as if they were a chain of successful motels; impose uniform rules of procedure; cut costs; meet the customer's demands for better service; teach the kitchen staff to speak English; insist that the desk clerks know how to work the imported technology.

Alexander's brief addressed the profit-and-loss statements of the national economy, not the intellectual hopes or ambitions of the nation's children. What was wanted was a new generation of myrmidons fit "to perform specific difficult tasks." As long as the economy could make do with semiliterate or unskilled labor, then what difference did it make whether "another class of persons" learned to solve quadratic equations or read the novels of Henry James? Obviously, it made no difference at all, and so matters might have safely continued well into the twenty-third century if the economy hadn't suddenly found itself at a loss for workers familiar with the signs and digits of the new information order. For the past ten years committees of alarmed businessmen have been complaining about workers who cannot read or write or add or think or subtract. The corporate chairmen then go on to worry about the loss of America's place in the world, about our declining rates of productivity, about our failure to compete on equal terms with the Germans and the Japanese.

Attempting to allay these concerns, Alexander proposed a number of specific remedies: grants of public money for students qualified to attend private or parochial schools; standardized achievement tests (in English, math, science, history, and geography); vocational requirements aligned with the requirements of the labor markets; construction of

535 new schools, presumably innovative, funded and designed by benevolent corporations. The federal government, of course, committed relatively little money to its new and revolutionary plan—no more than $690 million, a sum well short of what the Pentagon spent for the fireworks display in Iraq. President Bush and Secretary Alexander offered their proposals more in the spirit of suggestions to the state and municipal authorities that pay most of the costs of American public education. But even if the administration had been willing to back its advice with cash, I'm afraid that the result would be as malformed as one of the secretary's business deals or one of the President's longer sentences. Change the schools into the intellectual equivalent of factories or sweatshops and you turn freedom of mind into an enemy of the state. The unauthorized answer slows down production and threatens to lower the average test score.

The difficulty, as Woodrow Wilson well and clearly understood, is political. It is the status quo that must be protected and transformed, not the children or the schools. But how do you teach people to solve the new equations unless you also teach them how to think? And if you teach too many people how to think, then how can you be sure that they won't ask the wrong kind of questions? Why would any politician wish to confront an informed citizenry that could read the federal budget, decipher the news from Washington, and break down the election-year images into their subsets of component lies? Why would the purveyors of American goods and services choose to afflict themselves with a public intelligent enough to see through the scrim of the paid advertisements? The success of the American dream, like the success of MasterCard and the Republican Party, presupposes the eager and uncritical consumption of junk in all its commercial declensions. Teach a man to think for himself and maybe he won't buy the after-shave lotion or believe that the glorious victory in Kuwait proves the need for a newer and

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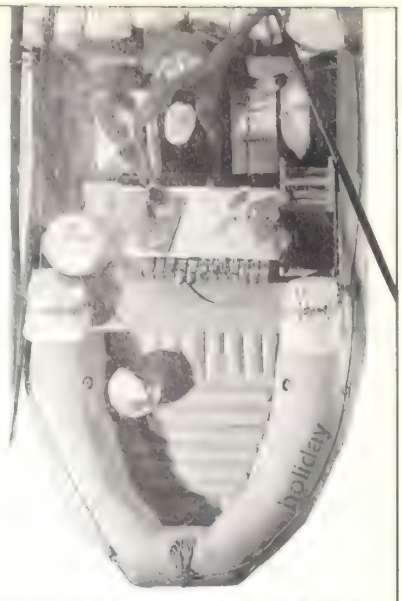
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[illegible] might even

[illegible] the possibility of [illegible] implicit in too thorough a course of study, the schoolmasters of Woodrow Wilson's generation took it upon themselves to rig the curriculum in such a way that discouraged the habits of skepticism or dissent. They redefined democracy as "primarily a mode of associated living" (as opposed to a dedication to the belief in liberty), and they argued that American schools should cut the cloth of their teaching to what John Dewey called "the circumstances, needs, and opportunities of industrial civilization." They had in mind the training of a contented labor force, prospective members of the national economic team, "socially efficient" workers who understood that what was great about America was the greatness of its gross national product and not the greatness of its character and spirit.

The new program displaced the older republican hope of a citizenry schooled to the task of self-government. Jefferson had urged the teaching of political history so that Americans might learn "how to judge for themselves what will secure or endanger their freedom." The managers of the newly emerging nation-state, like Messrs. Alexander and Bush, didn't have much use for citizens, especially citizens likely to see the would-be despot behind the mask of the popular general or the avuncular judge. Jefferson had asked, in effect, how could free men protect their liberties if they never learned that it was the business of most politicians to remove those liberties. The Wilson administration subtracted a good many liberties from the public domain during the First World War, and Wilson's propaganda ministry invented the syllabus of the great books of Western civilization (what we now know as "the canon") as a means of political indoctrination. The course was meant to quiet what a dean at Columbia University called "the destructive element in our society," to produce students who "shall be safe for democracy," and to make of the American troops in France what *History Teachers Magazine* called "thinking bayonets."

For the past seventy or eighty years the country's educational authorities have done their best to suppress the habit of critical thought. The objective (in 1991, as in 1905 or 1920) conforms to the requirements of a market geared to blind and insatiable consumption. Because the schools serve an economic system (as opposed to an intellectual ideal), they promote, quite properly, the habits of mind necessary to the preservation of that system. A successful American education bears comparison to the commercial procedure for changing caterpillars into silk instead of moths. Silkworms can be turned to a profit, but moths blow around in the wind and do nothing to add to the wealth of the corporation or the power of the state.

The American people have spent billions of dollars on education over the past forty years, and by now I would have thought that we might have acquired the wit or the courage to say that the condition of the schools accurately reflects our intent. We are a people blessed with a genius for large organizational tasks, and if we were serious in our pious blathering about the schools—if we honestly believed that mind took precedence over money—then our educational system surely would stand as the eighth wonder of the world. But we don't like, and we don't trust, the forces of intellect—not unless they can be tied securely to a commercial profit or a scientific benefit.

If many of our public schools resemble penal institutions, and if, despite the achievements of a relatively few gifted or fortunate individuals, the population at large sinks further into the sloughs of illiterate superstition, then I cannot help but think that the result is neither an accident nor a mistake. We make it as difficult as possible for our children to learn anything other than their proper place in the economic order because we fear the power of untrammeled thought. Most of what passes for education in the United States deadens the desire for learning because it fails to awaken the student to the unique value of his or her own mind. If the public schools employ the devices of overcrowded classrooms, recitations by rote, questions shaped to the simple answer of right or wrong, it is because the society regards the realm of thought as a subversive conspiracy likely to cause nothing but trouble. An inept and insolent bureaucracy armed with badly written textbooks instills in the class the attitudes of passivity, compliance, and boredom. The students major in the arts of failure and the science of diminished expectations.

Outside the schoolroom we wage the same relentless campaign against free or unauthorized expression, and I think it is probably fair to estimate that the nation annually lays waste to roughly 50 percent of its intellectual capacity. George Orwell once observed that almost everything that goes by the name of pleasure represents a more or less successful attempt to destroy consciousness. The United States now spends upwards of $350 billion a year on liquor, pornography, and drugs, and the Cold War against the American intellect thus constitutes a more profitable business than the old arrangement with the Russians. Subsidized by the state and supported by the peep-show operators of the mass media, the erotic entertainments tether the public mind to the posts of sexual fantasy. Liberty, said Jefferson, has ambitious enemies, and what they cannot gain with restrictive laws and the closing of as many libraries as possible, they accomplish with bread and circuses.

The idea of freedom stands in as much need of revision as the geography of the supposedly lost frontier. Within the circles of advanced opinion, it is taken for granted that the new technologies (if only we can train enough people to operate them) will save us all, that man has vanquished nature, that his machines have made nonsense of the seasons and subjugated the tribes of Paleolithic instinct. The illuminati who make these confident announcements then proceed

to talk in a lighter and more conversational tone of voice about the corporate cul de sac in which they find themselves penned like so many sheep, about the faithlessness of their husbands or wives, the forgery of their tax returns, the silence of their children. Most people have the same hopes and aspirations—work in which they can find meaning and ways in which they can express their capacity to love. But if we haven't been taught to make the acquaintance of our own minds, how, in this most advanced of nations and most enlightened of times, can we manage to achieve those deceptively modest ends? And if our textbooks teach us that America is nothing more than the sum of its profits, then how do we expect to reinvent our politics, or our history, or our schools?

Some years ago in this space, I published a few melancholy notes about the reduced circumstances of our political discourse, and, from a woman in Maryland, I received a stern reminder to the effect that the fault, dear Brutus, was not in our stars. "We do not," she said, "ask nearly enough of ourselves—not of parents, not of children, not of women, not of men, not of our institutions, not of our talents, not of our national or our personal character, not of our Constitution's promise, which we betray." In that one sentence, she said most of what needs to be said about the emptiness of the nation's politics and the shabbiness of the nation's schools.

If we could stop thinking of ourselves primarily as consumers, perhaps we could understand the lost frontier as being always and everywhere present—as near at hand as the wish to murder, cheat, steal, lie, and generally conduct oneself in a manner unbecoming in an ape. Suppose that we could learn to recognize it in the death of a child in the next street, in any afternoon's proceedings in any criminal court, in the faces of people stupefied by their fear of poverty or the dark. Think how many of its large and various capacities the United States could put to use if only it knew why it was doing so. ■

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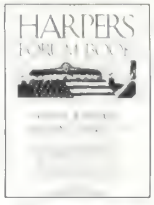
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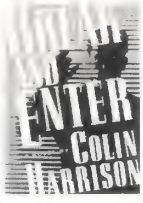
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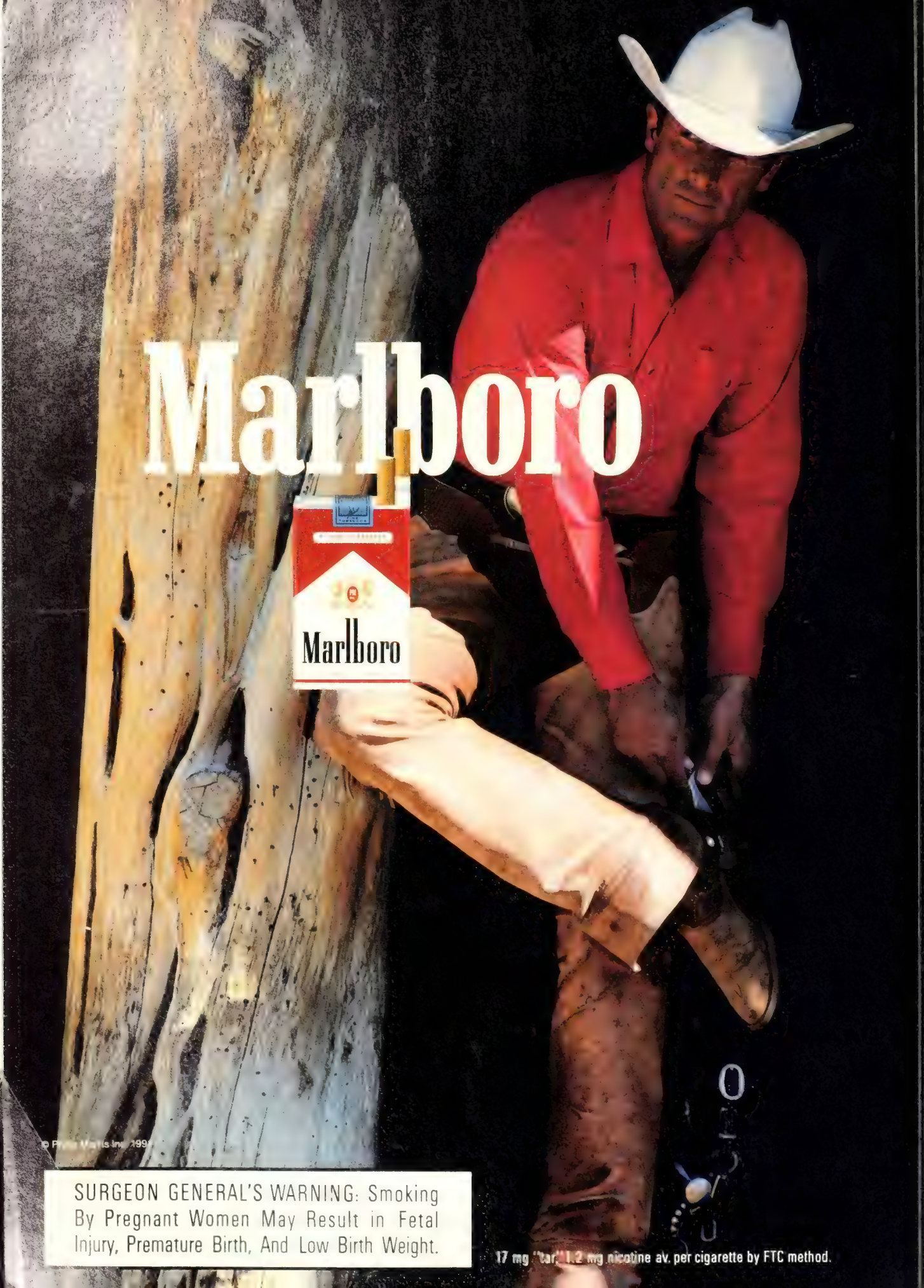
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Percentage change, since last year, in the number of Americans unemployed for longer than six months : +50

Chances that an unemployed American is receiving unemployment-insurance benefits : 1 in 3

Job and business inquiries made in March to the Commerce Department's Persian Gulf Reconstruction Center : 434,000

Number of Americans who have filed claims for the $1.5 billion in Iraqi assets frozen since last August : 1,000

Number of American claims for assets frozen during the 1979 Iranian Revolution that are still pending : 3,300

Percentage of Americans who say that the Gulf war was a "victory for the United States" : 36 (see page 54)

Number of German conscientious objectors who registered with the German military in January : 22,000

Percentage change, during 1990, in Germany's foreign trade surplus : –90

Estimated number of Nazi video games on sale on the black market in Germany and Austria : 140

Number of entries in the "Predict the Fall of Fidel" contest sponsored by the Council for Inter-American Security : 1,200

Price the Bulgarian government charges for a night at the palace of its deposed communist leader : $1,200

Estimated black-market price, in California, of a state-issued handicapped-parking permit : $25

Percentage increase, since 1981, in the number of U.S. health- and life-insurance firms that have gone bankrupt : 600

Percentage increase, since 1988, in the number of cases of measles diagnosed in the United States : 680

Chances that an American child born this year will spend at least one year on welfare before reaching adulthood : 1 in 3

Chances that a black American child will be born to a single mother : 2 in 3

Number of the 10 largest U.S. cities in which white residents are in the majority : 3

Number in 1980 : 6

Chances that an American believes that "vigilantism is justified under certain circumstances" : 1 in 3

Number of the original 13 American states that cannot locate their handwritten original copy of the Bill of Rights : 4

Price of an American flag necktie that plays "The Star-Spangled Banner," from a Bradenton, Florida, company : $19.95

Number of professional baseball players who have named a child after Texas Rangers pitcher Nolan Ryan : 11

Number of U.S. households that watched NBC each week in 1979, when the network was in last place : 13,300,000

Number that watch NBC today, when the network is in first place : 11,800,000

Number of calls Levi Strauss received in 1990 from people describing what they do in their 501 jeans : 802,000

Estimated percentage of these calls that were obscene, according to Levi Strauss : 10

Chances that an American woman who is not a virgin has had only one sexual partner in her life : 1 in 3

Percentage of American junior high school students who say they have sex at least once a week : 7

Number of Czechs who have joined the Independent Erotic Initiative Party since its establishment last year : 4,000

Number of gambling casinos an Austrian company has opened in Czechoslovakia since January 1990 : 13

Number of hours that U.S. convenience-store employees spend counting pennies each year : 5,500,000

Chances that an electronic scanner in a New York City supermarket will overcharge on a sale item : 1 in 2

Chances that an American's credit record contains errors : 1 in 2

Percentage of Americans who say they develop nervous tics under stress : 28

Average number of "uhs" used by college science professors while lecturing, per minute : 1.39

Average number used by college humanities professors, per minute : 4.85

Number of years a University of South Florida engineering professor has studied the crunching of potato chips : 6

Quarts of saliva the human mouth produces each day : 1

Average number of hot dogs Americans eat in July : 1,000,000,000

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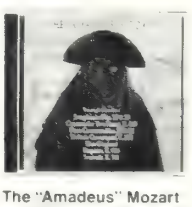
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READINGS

[Speech]

THE ILLUSION OF DISILLUSIONMENT

From "The Soul of Man Under Secularism," by Christopher Lasch, a speech delivered in April at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. The speech also appears in the July issue of New Oxford Review, *published in Berkeley, California. Lasch's most recent book is* The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics, *published by Norton. His essay "The Lost Art of Political Argument" appeared in the September 1990 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

There is a vast body of commentary on the modern spiritual plight, all of which assumes that the experience of doubt, moral relativism, and despair is distinctively modern and, in some sense, the product of mankind's "maturity." A survey of this literature, which includes the works of Freud, Jung, and Weber, reveals a recurring imagery that links the history of culture to the life cycle of individuals. In this analogy, civilization has passed through distinct phases, moving from a childhood of naive faith to the detached skepticism of an adult. Jung's description of the modern condition, for example, begins with a reference to the lost childhood of the race. The medieval world, in which "men were all children of God . . . and knew exactly what they should do and how they should conduct themselves," now lies "as far behind as childhood." In this modern view, religion, at least in its traditional forms, can no longer speak to the needs of a world that has outgrown its childhood. Freud's book on religion, which bears the scornful title *The Future of an Illusion*, concludes that religion has no future at all. Likening it to a "childhood neurosis," he insists that "men cannot remain children for ever."

The unexamined premise that history can be compared to an individual's growth from childhood to maturity makes it possible to condemn any form of cultural conservatism or any respect for tradition as simply an expression of the natural human tendency to cling to the security of childhood and to resist emotional and intellectual growth. The educated classes, unable to escape the burden of sophistication, may envy the naive faiths of the past; they may even envy the masses who continue unthinkingly to observe traditional faiths in the twentieth century, not yet having been exposed to the wintry blasts of modern critical thinking. They cannot trade places with the unenlightened masses, however, any more than they can return to childhood. Once the critical habit of mind has been fully assimilated, no one who understands its implications can find any refuge or resting place in premodern systems of thought and belief.

It is this experience of disillusionment, more than anything else, that has been held to distinguish the artist and the intellectual from unreflective creatures of convention, those people who allegedly distrust artists and intellectuals precisely because they—the naive multitude—cannot bear to hear the bad news. Unenlightened ages past might be forgiven for believing things no educated person could, in the twentieth century, still believe, or

ting literally mythologies better understood in a figurative or metaphorical sense; one might even forgive the modern proletarian, excluded from an education by virtue of his unremitting toil; but the bourgeois philistine lives in an enlightened age, with easy access to enlightened culture, yet deliberately chooses not to see the light, lest it destroy the illusions essential to his peace of mind. The intellectual alone looks straight into the light without blinking. Disillusioned but undaunted: Such is the self-image of modernity, so proud of its intellectual emancipation that it makes no effort to conceal the spiritual price that has to be paid.

We might call it a quaint conceit, this mental habit of playing off our disillusionment against the innocence of our ancestors, except that it originates in an impulse that is anything but quaint and has very serious consequences, not the least of which is to prevent an understanding of vitally important matters. It betrays a predisposition to read history either as a tragedy of lost illusions or as the progress of critical reason.

I say "either/or," but of course these two versions of the modernist historical myth are closely related; indeed, they are symbiotically dependent on each other. It is the progress of critical reason that allegedly leads to lost illusions; disillusionment represents the price of progress.

THE NAIVE BELIEF THAT OUR WISHES GOVERN THE UNIVERSE IS PRECISELY WHAT RELIGION ATTACKS

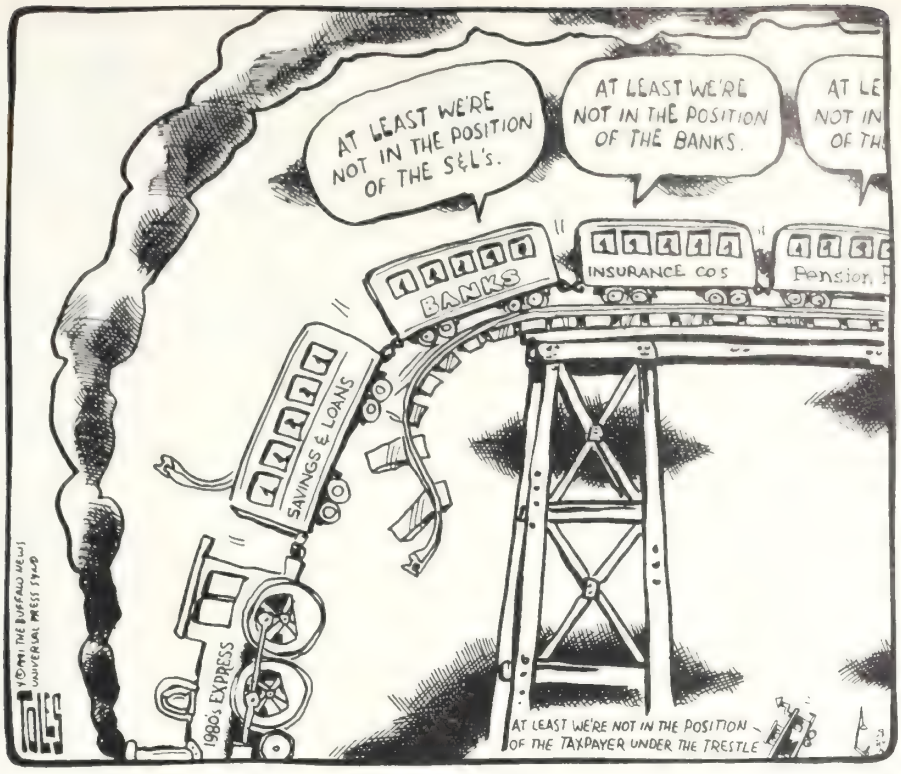
From this point of view, the relation of past to present is defined above all by the contrast between simplicity and sophistication. The barrier that divides the past from the present—an impassable barrier, in the imagination of modernity—is the experience of disillusionment, which makes it impossible to recapture the innocence of earlier days. Disillusionment, we might say, is the characteristic form of modern pride.

This pride is evident not only in the aggressively triumphal view of cultural progress that dismisses the past without regrets but, paradoxically, in the nostalgic myths of the past as well. Nostalgia and the idea of progress go hand in hand. The assumption that our civilization has achieved a level of unparalleled complexity naturally gives rise to a yearning for bygone simplicity.

Nostalgia is superficially loving in its re-creation of the past, but it evokes the past only to bury it alive. It shares with the belief in progress, to which it is only superficially opposed, an eagerness to proclaim the death of the past and to deny history's hold over the present. Those who mourn the death of the past and those who acclaim it both take for granted that our age has outgrown its childhood. Both find it difficult to believe that history still haunts our enlightened, disillusioned adolescence (or maturity or senility or whatever stage of the life cycle we have allegedly reached). Both are governed, in their attitude toward the past, by the prevailing disbelief in ghosts.

Perhaps the most important casualty of this habit of mind is a proper understanding of religion. In the commentary on the modern spiritual predicament, religion is consistently treated as a source of intellectual and emotional security, rather than as a challenge to complacency and pride. Its ethical teachings are misconstrued as a body of simple commandments leaving no room for ambiguity or doubt. Recall Jung's description of medieval Christians as "children of God [who] knew exactly what they should do and how they should conduct themselves." Joseph Wood Krutch, the early-twentieth-century critic, took the same view of religion. Medieval theology, according to Krutch, made the conduct of life "an exact science." It offered a "plan of life" that was "delightfully simple." Medieval Christians "accepted the laws of God in a fashion exactly parallel to that in which the contemporary scientist accepts the Laws of Nature"; this unquestioning obedience to an authoritative science of morals was the only alternative to "moral nihilism." "As soon as one begins to doubt either the validity of the laws of God . . . or as soon as one begins to raise a question as to the purpose of life," one begins to slide down the slippery slope to relativism, moral anarchy, and cultural despair.

What has to be questioned here is the assumption that religion *ever* provided a set of comprehensive and unambiguous answers to ethical questions, answers completely resistant to skepticism; or that it forestalled speculation about the meaning and purpose of life; or that religious people in the past were unacquainted with existential despair. The famous collection of songs written by medieval students preparing for the priesthood, *Carmina Burana*, should be enough in themselves to dispel this notion; they give voice, these disturbing compositions, to an age-old suspicion that the universe is ruled by Fortune, not by Providence, that life has no higher purpose at all, and that the better part of moral wisdom is to



From the Buffalo News.

enjoy life while you can.

Or consider the varieties of religious experience analyzed by William James in his book of that name, a book that is distinguished by a complete indifference to issues of historical chronology. To readers formed by the self-consciously modern tradition, such an indifference might appear to be a weakness of James's book, but it is essential to his point—that the deepest variety of religious faith always, in every age, arises out of a background of despair. Religious faith asserts the goodness of being in the face of suffering and evil. Black despair and alienation—which have their origin not in perceptions exclusively modern but in the bitterness always felt toward a God who allows evil and suffering to flourish—often become the prelude to conversion. An awareness of "radical evil" underlies the spiritual intoxication that finally comes with "yielding" and "self-surrender." If nothing else, the shadow of death hangs over our pleasures and triumphs, calling them into question.

The modern world has no monopoly on the fear of death or alienation from God. Alienation is the normal condition of human existence. Rebellion against God is the natural reaction to the discovery that the world was not made for our personal convenience. The further discovery that suffering is visited on the just and unjust alike is hard to square with a belief in a benign and omnipotent creator, as we know from the Book of Job.

But it is just this comfortable belief—that the purposes of the Almighty coincide with our purely human purposes—that religious faith requires us to renounce. Religion reminds us of the inescapable limits on human power and freedom. Far from endorsing comfortable superstitions, it undermines the most important superstition of all—that the human race controls its own destiny. According to its critics, religion provides the security of childlike dependence on a father figure who answers all our prayers. But the naive belief that our wishes govern the universe is precisely what religion attacks. We have no special claim on the universe, and our prayers are answered only when we surrender that claim: Such is the true meaning of religious faith, as it has been understood by a long succession of prophets through the ages.

The religious critique of pride ought to speak directly and compellingly to modern men and women, who find it galling to be reminded of their dependence on powers beyond their own control or at least beyond the control of humanity in general. Such peo-



GARY HUSTWAM

"Divorce Quilt," by Katharine Brainard, a Rockville, Maryland, artist. Brainard sewed the quilt last fall, soon after filing for divorce from her husband of ten years. Certain items in the quilt have a direct connection to events in Brainard's marriage: The scattered pearls and satin buttons and the strips of satin represent her wedding dress and wedding pearls; the "Cat Woman" figure and the run-over stuffed cat represent her ex-husband's new girlfriend, who is named Kitty. The quilt was displayed in March and April at G Street Fabrics, a Rockville store, and was purchased by Harold Goldstein, a Potomac, Maryland, psychologist, as a fiftieth-birthday present for his wife.

ple find it difficult to acknowledge the justice and goodness of these higher powers when the world is so obviously full of evil. They find it difficult to reconcile their expectations of worldly success and happiness, so often undone by events, with the idea of a just, loving, and all-powerful creator. Unable to conceive of a God who does not regard human happiness as the be-all and end-all of creation, they cannot see the central paradox of religious faith: that the secret of happiness lies in renouncing the right to be happy.

What makes the modern temper modern, then, is not that we have lost our childish sense of dependence but that the normal rebellion *against* dependence is more pervasive today than [illegible] used to be. But this rebellion is not new, as Flannery O'Connor reminds us when she observes that "there are long periods in the history of all of us . . . when the truth as revealed by faith is hideous, emotionally disturbing, downright repulsive." If "right now the whole world seems to be going through a dark night of the soul," it is because the normal rebellion against dependence appears to be sanctioned by our scientific control over nature—the same progress of science that has allegedly destroyed religious superstition.

Those wonderful machines that science has enabled us to construct have made it possible to imagine ourselves as masters of our fate. In an age that fancies itself as disillusioned, this is the one illusion—the illusion of mastery—that remains as tenacious as ever. But now that we are beginning to grasp the limits of our control over the natural world, the future of this illusion (to invoke Freud once again) is very much in doubt—more problematical, certainly, than the future of religion.

[Letters]

DISPOSABLE POLICY AT THE EPA

From a series of letters regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's "Environmental Consumer's Handbook," which the EPA's Office of Solid Waste issued last October. The handbook provided consumers with tips on how to reduce household waste by recycling and "making environmentally aware decisions about the products and packaging you purchase." In February the EPA halted distribution of the handbook after receiving numerous complaints from companies that manufacture disposable products. The documents below were obtained in April under a Freedom of Information Act request by Environmental Action Foundation, a Washington research group.

December 20, 1990

Peggy Knight
Director
External Relations and Education
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Dear Peggy:

Pursuant to our conversation yesterday, I enclose comments from both the Foodservice and Packaging Institute (FPI) and the American Paper Institute (API) [both of which are represented by this letter's author] concerning the EPA's publication "The Environmental Consumer's Handbook." I know that FPI is extremely concerned about this and that Joseph Bow [the president of FPI] would like to have distribution stopped and the publication recalled.

From my personal perspective, the publication appears to be one-sided. Much of the material appears to represent the views of environmental activists, but apparently little or no consideration has been given to the positions of the industries whose products are discussed in the publication—particularly the foodservice disposables industry and the paper and plastics industries.

For example, on page three: "Products and packaging designed to be thrown away after a single use can increase disposal costs, deplete our natural resources, contribute to litter, and add to our nation's waste disposal difficulties." How do these items increase disposal costs? How do paper items deplete natural resources when more trees are planted than harvested? How do these items contribute to litter when it is the users who litter, not the items?

Page ten: "Instead of using disposable cups, take a ceramic mug or glass to work that can be washed and reused. Carry your own cup to meetings or on breaks. At home, use reusable and durable plates, cups, silverware, and food containers." This statement fails to consider the safety, health, and sanitation benefits of disposables. It is suggested that the statement be eliminated or modified to say that reusables be considered when proper sanitation standards can be observed. It must also state that paper, plastic, and aluminum foodservice disposables can be recycled or composted.

May I suggest that we arrange a meeting very soon to discuss this?

Sincerely,
Ronald A. Duchin
Mongoven, Biscoe, & Duchin

[Songs]

HEREAFTER TOP 40

From the list of "non-religious vocal solos" provided to customers of Wulff Family Mortuaries in St. Paul, Minnesota, who are ordering a tribute video as part of a funeral package. The videos, which cost between $125 and $195, feature still photographs of the deceased accompanied by a musical selection, which can be chosen from the list below. Nearly two thirds of Wulff's customers order the videos, which can be shown at the funeral service.

Bridge Over Troubled Waters
Climb Ev'ry Mountain
Come Saturday Morning
He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother
Hills of Yesterday
I Believe
Impossible Dream
Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing
Morning Has Broken
My Way
Red Roses for a Blue Lady
September Song
Sing
Theme from *Love Story*
Time in a Bottle
We've Only Just Begun
What a Wonderful World
You'll Never Walk Alone
You've Got a Friend

January 14, 1991

Don [Clay, assistant administrator, EPA]:

[illegible] a note to let you know of some of the activity that a recent OSW [Office of Solid Waste] document has generated. Last fall, OSW published "The Environmental Consumer's Handbook," a forty-page booklet on what the consumer can do to be less wasteful in the course of his/her routine activities. The brochure has become one of OSW's most requested documents. Numerous companies and organizations have made very favorable comments about the document and have requested multiple copies for their own distribution.

At the same time, EPA has recently received strongly critical letters from Ronald Duchin, an attorney on behalf of the Foodservice and Packaging Institute (FPI) and the American Paper Institute (API). The criticism centers around product packaging and the use of reusable products instead of their disposable equivalents. The specific comments appear to be little more than attempts to defend the continued use of disposable and single-use products.

The handbook was carefully and thoroughly reviewed within EPA. OSW went to great lengths to maintain neutrality in this booklet. I suspect that there will always be something in documents promoting source reduction that will upset particular interests. However, I am convinced that the criticisms to which the booklet has been subject so far are a reflection of various self-interests and not a burning desire to improve the handbook's effectiveness.

I understand that FPI and API are attempting to drum up support among their single-service industry colleagues. I think we'll confront more of this as we increase source-reduction efforts. I will soon meet with FPI and API to hear their criticisms. I'll let you know the results of the meeting; it may heat up, since I have no intention of pulling this publication.

Sylvia Lowrance
[Director of the Office of Solid Waste]

February 14, 1991

Donald Clay
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Dear Mr. Clay:

There are a great number of excellent ideas presented in "The Environmental Consumer's Handbook." As a result of reading the book, my wife and I now reuse our plastic peanut butter containers as freezer containers for soup, spaghetti sauce, and the like. But there are a fair number of suggestions to which we at Scott Paper Company take serious exception.

The handbook positions disposables as unnecessary and the use of same as bordering on sinful. Yet there is almost no product, disposable or durable, that does not have a negative environmental impact. Before exhorting people to replace disposable cups with ceramic mugs and glasses, one should consider all the externalities. The suggestion seems simple, neat, and right until you consider the impact of the manufacturing process, the water, energy, and chemicals required to clean the utensils, and the potential hygiene problems.

We would ask that industry's views be reflected in the development of future publications. We would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your staff on this matter.

Sincerely,
Steve Conway
Scott Paper Company

[Contest Rules]

BUT IS IT FOOD?

From the application form for entrants in the Spam Sculpture Contest, which was held in May in Austin, Minnesota, as part of Spam Jamboree Day. The all-day festival, which also featured a Spam Recipe Contest and the crowning of a Spam king and queen, was sponsored by Geo. A. Hormel & Co., the makers of the popular luncheon meat. Hormel's head office is located in Austin.

Show us your sharpened artistic skill and create an edible masterpiece. This is a one-hour contest; completed sculptures will be judged at noon.

Suggested categories:

Food, animals, buildings, abstract designs, cartoon characters, inanimate objects.

Contest rules:

1. Entries will be judged on originality and creativity. Pre-carved pieces will be disqualified. A minimum of garnish or accessories may be used in the final presentation. A limit of two cans of Spam will be provided.

2. Bring your own carving tools, Chinet plates, and carving boards. Practice time will not be allowed. Working from drawings and photos is acceptable. Bring a "title" for your finished piece.



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February 15, 1991

[illegible] Weddle
Office of Solid Waste
[illegible] Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Weddle:

Sweetheart Cup [illegible] is the nation's largest manufacturer of single-use paper and plastic products. We believe that disposable foodservice products occupy a useful and legitimate place in modern society, and that the statements made about disposables in this booklet are both unfair and based largely on misinformation rather than fact.

The handbook makes disparaging references to the "Throwaway Society," and implies that disposable products are unnecessary and frivolous uses of raw material. Yet the truth is that foodservice disposables possess a number of advantages over their reusable counterparts, particularly in the area of sanitation. For example, scientific studies have shown that single-service cups and plates have an average bacteria load of only 2.0 colonies per utensil, compared with 410 colonies for permanentware.

In addition, using disposables saves a great deal of water and electricity that would otherwise be used to operate dishwashers—an average of 71 gallons of water saved for every 100 cafeteria customers served. Foodservice disposables—when used and disposed of properly—are as environmentally responsible as they are useful.

Very truly yours,
Sandie J. Preiss
Sweetheart Cup Company

February 28, 1991

SUBJECT: "The Environmental Consumer's Handbook"
FROM: Don R. Clay, Assistant Administrator
TO: Regional Administrators

Recently, you received copies of "The Environmental Consumer's Handbook." Unfortunately, this booklet contains incorrect information. Because of our obligation to provide information to the public that is factually correct, it is necessary to suspend distribution at this time.

In view of the importance and popularity of this document, we plan to move ahead quickly to develop a revised edition. We intend to include a cross-section of interested parties in an effort to develop a more comprehensive review process. We will be back in touch as revised drafts are ready for your comments.

Thank you for your help on this matter.

[Reasons]

YOUR ASSAULT WEAPON AND YOU

From "101 Reasons Why You Need an 'Assault Firearm,'" by Evan F. Nappen, in the April issue of "The Guardian," the newsletter of the Coalition of New Jersey Sportsmen. Nappen is counsel to the coalition, a lobbying group that supports the right of individuals to bear arms.

One question we are all tired of hearing in the so-called debate over so-called assault firearms is, Why does anybody need one? Here is the answer once and for all.

You need an assault firearm:

1. to help continue the American tradition of citizen/soldier.
2. for recreation.
3. to get quick extra shots at more game while hunting.
4. to defend yourself against a street gang.
5. to defend yourself against mob violence.
6. to defend yourself against looters.
7. to assist the police in an emergency (e.g., the 1966 Texas Tower sniper incident, when citizens with M-1's assisted police).
8. to help defend the country from a foreign invasion.
9. to help defend the country from an internal takeover.
10. to pay the federal tax on guns, which goes to aid wildlife.
11. to appreciate the evolution of firearm technology.
12. to defend your business.
13. to defend your home.
14. to defend your boat.
15. to defend your ranch.
16. to defend your farm.
17. to defend your family.
18. as an investment and a hedge against inflation.
19. as a military souvenir.
20. to own one of the most mechanically safe firearms.
21. to own a more psychologically intimidating firearm.
22. to own the firearm least likely to be used in a crime (fewer than 1 percent of firearms used in crimes are assault firearms).
23. to own a firearm used in Olympic competition.
24. to appreciate the mechanical genius of firearm designers.
25. to reject anti-gun media bias.
26. to be part of an armed populace, creat-



"Model for Adjustable Ground Bra," by Vito Acconci, a New York City sculptor. The model was displayed in April at the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York City, along with four "wall bras," each of whose cups measure eight feet in diameter.

ing a tactical disadvantage for any potential enemies.

27. to own a firearm more useful to the physically handicapped.

28. to protect yourself against a pack of feral dogs.

29. because they are interesting.

30. to exercise your constitutional rights.

31. to exercise a natural right.

32. to exercise a human right.

33. to defend yourself after a New York City–type blackout.

34. to defend yourself after a St. Croix–type hurricane, in which both officers and escaped prisoners ran amok.

35. to avoid a Tiananmen Square in the U.S.

36. to protect livestock from predators.

37. to show support for the political ideals of the Founding Fathers.

38. to own a firearm that is difficult to conceal.

39. to own a firearm that the media glamorize.

40. to own a firearm that might be banned.

41. to own a firearm that is banned.

42. to own a firearm that is a work of art.

43. to own a firearm that made history (e.g., an M-1 carbine).

44. to own a firearm that can be frozen solid and still function.

45. because you believe in freedom.

46. because YOU say you need one. In America, an individual's needs should not be determined by the state. There are approximately 70 million firearm owners in the country. That's 70 million *more* reasons for owning any firearm.

[Diary]

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HIRING: A CASE STUDY

From "The Candidate: Inside One Affirmative Action Search," by "G. Kindrow," in the April issue of Lingua Franca, The Review of Academic Life, *published in Mamaroneck, New York. "G. Kindrow" is the pseudonym of a professor at a large midwestern university, which is referred to here as "Midwestern State."*

September 23, 1989

The first faculty meeting of the term for the Department of English at Midwestern State. One of our assistant professors was denied tenure last year, and, given the financial constraints on the university, we were anxious to find out whether we would be able to replace

TOMORROW'S CARD CATALOGUE

From the list of new categories that have been added to the catalogue of subject headings at the Hennepin County Library in Minnetonka, Minnesota, in the past year. Sanford Berman, the library's head cataloguer, has been working since 1969 to persuade the Library of Congress to adopt new subject headings to reflect societal changes and to change old headings that are "inauthentic or slanted." The Library of Congress frequently accepts Berman's suggestions, although usually not until several years after their adoption at the Hennepin Library. None of the headings below have yet been accepted by the Library of Congress.

Afro-American Baseball Umpires
Black-on-Black Crime
Child Investigative Journalists
Children of Bootleggers
Christian Mate Selection
Compulsive Behavior in Gay Men
Deaf Journalists
Disfigured Teenagers
Divorced Women's Rights
Ecocide
Ecotourism
Ex-lovers
Feminist Dramatic Criticism
Fertility Specialists
Flag Burning
Hazing Victims
Home Taping
Infatuation in Boys
Jewish-American Women Astronauts
Lesbian Cartoonists
Mafia Wives
Matriarchs
Men and Cats
Natural Toiletries
Non-ageist Children's Videos
Oral Historians
Ponytails
Posses
Radical Chic
Rain Forest Movement
Rappers
Resourcefulness in Girls
Self-pity in Men
Spin Control (Public Relations)
Steam Punk Fiction
Women Citizen Diplomats

him. The chair of the department told us the following: "The dean has authorized a search at the assistant professor level for a 'minority' candidate."

Instantly the questions began. "What if we make a good-faith search and fail to come up with a suitable minority candidate? Can we then hire a non-minority candidate?" "Does the search include women, or just ethnic minorities?" "What counts as a minority?" The answers: "I don't know what would happen if we searched and failed to find a minority candidate." "No, women don't count." "I don't know exactly how 'minority' is being defined." The department asked the chair to try to get some answers from the dean.

Most of my colleagues—largely liberal/left ideologically and disillusioned Democrats politically—were sympathetic to the need to have minorities and women on the faculty. The university, after all, had a substantial black and Hispanic undergraduate presence, and we believed that, in pedagogic terms, it was important for undergraduates to see that members of their community could be successful academics. To this end, the department had been quite conscious of the need to hire women—who, as a consequence, were represented at all ranks, including full professor.

Many of us, myself included, felt that although we would prefer a suitable minority candidate, we were not prepared to make any concessions as to quality. Others were prepared to lower standards, on the grounds either that the traditional standards were biased toward "masculine," "Eurocentric" criteria or that it was more important to provide a minority "role model" than to keep the same standards.

All of us agreed on one thing: that it was going to be very difficult to come up with a suitable candidate. While we are a highly ranked department, we are not in the same class as Michigan or Harvard. And with the total pool of qualified minority Ph.D.'s dismayingly small and heavily recruited, especially by elite institutions, this was a severe liability.

We decided to put an ad in the principal English-literature-association newsletter for job hunters. The chair also placed an ad in a publication I'll call *Black Opportunity*, a newsletter aimed specifically at listing jobs for minority candidates. (The ad cost $300—approximately five times the cost of the advertisement in our association newsletter. A nice lesson in affirmative action economics.) A search committee, of which I was chosen to be a part, was set up to screen forthcoming applications.

October 15

We now had answers to some of the questions our chairman had taken to the dean. Blacks, "Hispanic-surnamed" persons, and Native Americans counted as minorities; East Indians and Asians did not. Thus the first absurdity emerged: Someone born in Argentina to a Jewish family named Mendoza would count; a "boat person" from Vietnam would not. The question of what would happen if we did not find a suitable minority candidate was left ambiguous by the dean. But the underlying message seemed to be, "Don't count on the position being available." Applications began to arrive.

November 2

Applications consist of a transcript of the candidate's grades, a curriculum vitae, three letters of reference, a cover letter, and a written sample of the candidate's research. A problem emerges: How do you tell who is a minority candidate? The applications, quite reasonably, have no place to indicate race. While names can single out Hispanics—although a colleague and I spent most of an afternoon trying to figure out from clues in the vitae whether the clearly Romance-language surname of one candidate indicated he was Italian or Hispanic—they are no help in identifying blacks. One looks for subtle, or not so subtle, clues: The candidate has an undergraduate degree from a largely black school; the candidate is working on a Ph.D. that involves minority issues; the candidate belongs to a primarily minority professional organization; the candidate was born in Ethiopia; the thesis supervisor is wily enough to smuggle in a reference (not so easy without being open to charges of patronizing or racist behavior).

November 10

At this stage, looking day after day at applications from hopeful Ph.D.'s, I began to develop moral qualms. Basically, I was screening them for indications of race, not scholarship. It was as simple as the two piles of applications on my desk: one for minority candidates, another for non-minorities.

November 15

The search committee began to make a short list of candidates to invite for interviews. Given the time and faculty available, we figured we could interview fourteen people, but it was clear that we didn't have fourteen potential minority interviewees. In fact, of the 300 applications we had received, we had about 20 minority applications, most of whom were just not qualified. We decided to interview four people—all blacks, as it turned out, and none from this year's crop of Ph.D.'s. Rather, they were faculty members in tenure-track jobs. If we hired, we were going to be raiding another institution. There was general agreement that these candidates looked like reasonable bets and, in any case, there were no other options. The candidates had Ph.D.'s from Princeton, Penn, CUNY, and Rutgers. The remaining ten interviews were scheduled with non-minority men and women.

December 28–30

Nobody who hasn't sat in a stuffy hotel room for nine hours a day of job interviews

[Business Advice]

RELAXING BY THE LABOR POOL

From "Get Free Help," by "Z," in the January 8 issue of Executive Strategies, *a weekly published in New York City by the National Institute of Business Management. "Z" is a regular columnist for the newsletter.*

You need ideas for a new marketing plan, sales campaign, or product presentation, but you don't have the budget to pay for it. It happens to a lot of us in these tight times.

Some shrewd managers I know have resorted to clever tactics to get what they need—and they don't pay a cent for the information. They put an ad in the paper looking for someone at or just above their own level, even though they don't have a job available. Then they put applicants to work, writing a marketing plan or sales presentation.

Since, these days, any ad promising a good job pulls like crazy, you can often get a dozen top-drawer applicants. You can then sift through the material and pick the plumpest raisin out of each cake. The result can be a cornucopia of good ideas tailored to your specific needs. It's up to you, of course, to put them together and give the finished report or plan your personal stamp.

Is the approach unethical? I don't think so. Applicants benefit in two ways. They get their names high up in a potential job bank, and they sharpen skills they'll use at their next job.

Besides, in hard times you have to grab for any advantage you can find.





"Pink Elephant with Bottles and Eye in Cocktail Glass" and "Girl with Cigar-like Flute and Goats," from Thrift Store Paintings, *a catalogue edited by Jim Shaw. The catalogue accompanies an exhibit of more than one hundred paintings, bought at thrift shops, that will be on display at New York City's Metro Pictures gallery this September. Shaw, a Los Angeles artist, has collected more than 250 thrift-shop paintings over the past fifteen years.*

can fully appreciate the horror of it all. Virtually everybody was worse in person than on paper, which was inevitable, given the implausibility of their letters of recommendation.

One candidate, however, the man from Rutgers, actually proved more lively, more acute, and wittier than his letters suggested. He displayed a wide range of learning and an analytical mind, impressing the entire committee. In addition, two other minority candidates were possibilities. Neither had done particularly well at the interview, but they both seemed to be good teachers and their letters were impressive.

That same day, one of the non-minority candidates we had interviewed, an extremely promising young professor from a major graduate department, cornered me in the hall. He was currently in an unhappy academic position that left him little time for research; despite this, he had just had a book published. He was desperate to get another position, and he knew that our department had nobody in his area of expertise. "How did I do? Do you think I will get an invitation to visit the campus?" I told him that while he had done well in the interview, the department would make the decision about whom to invite to campus, we had various needs and priorities, blah, blah, blah. But I knew that when he got the standard rejection letter he would blame himself for not doing better in the interview, for not getting that extra letter of recommendation. I don't know if he would have felt better if I had said, "You're not going to get another interview; you're white." But *I* would have.

January 5, 1990

At the first faculty meeting after the holidays, the interviewing committee made its report. We decided to invite three black candidates to campus; a fourth was held in reserve.

The man from Rutgers came, he saw, he conquered. His paper was interesting and thoughtful. He held up well under questioning, not overly defensive but holding his ground. The other two candidates more or less repeated their disappointing interviews.

January 12

A startling development. The dean was so impressed with two of the people on the short list that he gave us permission to hire both of them if we so chose. A freebie.

As we went around the room and got everyone's opinion, it became clear that the first offer was non-controversial. Indeed it was unanimous: the man from Rutgers. He was in a

field that we did not cover. He was clearly highly qualified. He was not an American black (he's a West Indian), but that was the dean's worry.

What about the dean's second choice? Here things turned slightly nasty (in an academic way). It became clear that the people in the candidate's area did not think that he was good enough. They had read his work and did not think it original or well argued. But, the argument from the opposition went, We can't be sure that he isn't good enough. Why not hire him and let the tenure process decide that issue? Meanwhile we have an extra member of the faculty. How can it hurt?

But others—the majority—saw another scenario as more probable. In six years, when the candidate was up for tenure, he presumably would have published extensively in respectable journals. He would have made the academic contacts to get good letters of recommendation. He would have made himself useful around campus. At that point, given that he was black, it would be impossible for the university to deny him tenure—no matter *what* the judgment of his peers. So if we thought that the person was unlikely to produce excellent work, we shouldn't make the appointment in the first place. Ultimately, this argument won out, and we decided not to appoint the second candidate. Ironically, in this case the candidate's race worked against him. Had he been white, many would have been willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, to give him a trial period, but political realities made that impossible. It's also true that had he been white, he would not have even made it to the interview stage.

January 17

I learned that the dean had offered the candidate a salary $4,000 greater than that of any other assistant professor, including those who had been in rank for five years longer and including an assistant professor who was nationally recognized as a "rising star." The candidate, who was teaching at a state university in the Northwest, accepted.

November 1

Now that it's all over, what is my view of how affirmative action works in the university context? It certainly does not conform to the picture painted by the opponents of "quotas." No unqualified individual was forced upon a department against its better judgment, at the cost of passing up much better qualified nonminority candidates. Nor is it the case that the department had "internalized" the process so that, without being forced to, it voluntarily

[Training Manual]

SMOOTH OPERATOR

From "Definitions and Examples of Discourteous Actions Which Warrant Discipline," an appendix to a manual used to train operators at New York Telephone. The document appeared in the Winter 1990 issue of 2600: The Hacker Quarterly, published in Setauket, New York.

1. NOT BUSINESSLIKE

Definition: Not exhibiting tone and manner felt to be appropriate in business; e.g., talking in a joking or jesting manner at inappropiate times, use of slang or non-standard vocabulary.

Example:

Customer: "I would like to call the sales manager person-to-person."

Operator: "Got ya," or "Oh, calling a big shot today!"

2. RUDE, ANTAGONISTIC, ABUSIVE

Definition: Offensive in manner or action. Ill-mannered, abrupt, forceful, argumentative, impatient, sarcastic, cutting.

Example:

Customer: "Operator, did you say the area code was 213 or 212?"

Operator: "Can't you understand English? I said 2-1-2!"

Example:

Customer: "When am I going to get my number, operator?"

Operator: "If you weren't so dumb you could dial it yourself," or "When I feel like it."

3. SWEARING, VULGAR

A. Profane

Definition: To use profanity. To debase by wrong, unworthy, or vulgar statements.

Example:

Customer: "Hey, operator, where have you been, out to coffee?"

Operator: "Customers like you give me a pain in the you-know-where."

B. Obscene

Definition: Disgusting, repulsive, dirty, foul, nasty, vile, unprintable.

Example:

Customer: "You connected me with a wrong number. Now try it again."

Operator: "Tough. Kiss my a--."

standards as a means to a good end. On the other hand, I do think that we were lucky: The outcome could easily have been [illegible]. If we had been faced with the choice of the number-two candidate and a dean who said it was that person or no one, what would the department have done?

Had this been a color-blind competition, our winning candidate would almost certainly not have made it to the interviewing stage, where his talents were able to show. His degree was not from a major graduate department, his letters were not from major figures, and he was not teaching at a major school. These factors would have led to his being lost in the shuffle of nearly 300 applications. His being black got him an interview. As to our good fortune, one has to remember that what was fortunate for us was unfortunate for Northwest. The total number of blacks in faculty positions nationwide was the same after the search as before. To a large extent, the search for minority candidates is a game of national musical chairs.

Meanwhile, the procedure has real costs for those non-minority candidates who thought they were in an open competition and who lost out. And it inevitably breeds bitterness and envy on their part. My own view is that we should adopt a truth-in-advertising policy. If we believe it is desirable to hire a black or a woman (whether as rectification for past injustices, to serve as a role model, or just to provide fresh perspectives in the discipline), why not just say so?



From Ms. health magazine

[Essay]

THE CONJUGAL MEAL OF THE MANTIS

From "Mating of the Mantis," in The Insect World of J. Henri Fabre, *edited by Edwin Way Teale, and published by Beacon Press in Boston. Fabre, who was born in 1823 in Saint-Léons, France, taught science and studied insects in his spare time until the age of fifty-five. At that time he dedicated his life to entomology; in 1907 he completed a ten-volume work on the life of insects.* The Insect World, *a selection from Fabre's magnum opus, had been out of print since 1949. Translated from the French by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos.*

The little that we have seen of the praying mantis's habits hardly tallies with what we might have expected from her popular name. To judge by the term *Prègo-Dieu*, we should look to see a placid insect, deep in pious contemplation; and we find ourselves in the presence of a cannibal, of a ferocious specter munching the brain of a panic-stricken victim. Nor is even this the most tragic part. The mantis has in store for us, in her relations with her own kith and kin, manners even more atrocious than those prevailing among the spiders, who have an evil reputation in this respect.

Let us watch the pairing and, to avoid the disorder of a crowd, let us isolate the couples in separate cages. And let us not forget the provisions, with which we will keep them well supplied, so that there may be no excuse of hunger.

The male, that slender swain, thinks the moment propitious. He makes eyes at his strapping companion; he turns his head in her direction; he throws out his chest. His little pointed face wears an almost impassioned expression. Motionless, in this posture, for a long time he contemplates the object of his desire. She does not stir, as though indifferent. The lover, however, has caught a sign of acquiescence, a sign of which I do not know the secret. He goes nearer; suddenly he spreads his wings, which quiver with a convulsive tremor. That is his declaration. He rushes, small as he is, upon the back of his corpulent companion, clings on as best he

can, steadies his hold. As a rule, the preliminaries last a long time. At last, coupling takes place, lasting sometimes for five or six hours.

Nothing worthy of attention happens between the two motionless partners. They end by separating, but only to unite again in a more intimate fashion. If the poor fellow is loved by his lady as the vivifier of her ovaries, he is also loved as a piece of highly flavored game. And, that same day, or at the latest on the morrow, he is seized by his spouse, who first gnaws his neck, in accordance with precedent, and then eats him deliberately, by little mouthfuls, leaving only the wings.

I was curious to know what sort of reception a second male might expect from a recently fertilized female. The result of my inquiry was shocking. The mantis, in many cases, is never sated with conjugal raptures and banquets. After a rest that varies in length, whether the eggs be laid or not, a second male is accepted and then devoured like the first. A third succeeds him, performs his function in life, is eaten, and disappears. A fourth undergoes a like fate. In the course of two weeks I have thus seen one and the same mantis use up seven males. She takes them all to her bosom and makes them pay for the nuptial ecstasy with their lives.

I should like to be able to say, in mitigation of these conjugal atrocities, that the mantis does not behave like this in a state of liberty; that the male, after doing his duty, has time to escape from his terrible mistress. What really occurs in the thickets I do not know; chance, a poor resource, having never instructed me concerning the love affairs of the mantis when at large. I can only go by what happens in the cages, where the captives, enjoying plenty of sunshine and food and spacious quarters, do not seem to suffer from homesickness in any way.

Well, what happens there utterly refutes the idea that the males are given time to escape. I find, by themselves, a horrible couple engaged as follows. The male, absorbed in the performance of his vital functions, holds the female in a tight embrace. But the wretch has no head; he has no neck; he has hardly a body. The other, with her muzzle turned over her shoulder, continues very placidly to gnaw what remains of the gentle swain. And, all the time, that masculine stump, holding on firmly, goes on with the business!

Love is stronger than death, people say. Taken literally, the aphorism has never received a more brilliant confirmation. A headless creature, an insect amputated down to the middle of the chest, a very corpse persists in endeavoring to give life. It will not let go until the abdomen, the seat of the procreative organs, is attacked.

Eating the lover after consummation of marriage, making a meal of the exhausted dwarf, henceforth good for nothing, can be understood, to some extent, in the insect world, which has no great scruples in matters of sentiment. But [illegible] the act goes beyond the wildest dreams of the most horrible imagination. I have seen it done with my own eyes and have not yet recovered from my astonishment.

[Police Reports]

TRUE CRIME

From the Police Blotter column in the February 7 and February 14 issues of the Illinois Valley News, *a weekly newspaper published in Cave Junction, Oregon*

Monday, January 28

Someone on Lone Mountain Road said his son was coming from California to harm him because of something that happened ten years ago.

Thursday, January 31

A woman in robe and slippers, who "appeared dazed," was reported in the 5200 block

[Recipe]

BACON IN WEST EGG

From "Breakfast," in Zelda Fitzgerald: The Collected Writings, *edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli, to be published next month by Scribner's. This selection first appeared in* Favorite Recipes of Famous Women, *published by Harper & Brothers in 1925.*

See if there is any bacon and, if there is, ask the cook which pan to fry it in. Then ask if there are any eggs and, if so, try to persuade the cook to poach two of them. It is better not to attempt toast, as it burns very easily. Also, in the case of bacon, do not turn the fire too high, or you will have to get out of the house for a week.

Serve, preferably on china plates, though gold or wood will do if handy.

Holland Loop Road at 4:00 P.M.

Someone's aunt was being pushed around by [illegible] in the 27000 block of Redwood Highway.

[illegible], *February 1*

Two juvenile people were running in and out of a restaurant. Their father was advised.

People were cutting wood up Dick George Road; the landlord didn't think they should.

Saturday, February 2

Two men in a truck were bothering young girls outside a restaurant at 9:36 P.M.

Sunday, February 3

A woman asked for a deputy to stand by while she obtained personal belongings. On the way, she saw the man from whom she was going to obtain the items. They made up. She had been drinking.

After a woman couldn't contact her mother-in-law in O'Brien because the phone was busy for an hour, a deputy checked; she was okay.

Monday, February 4

After a man sat in a car for an hour, a woman wanted him contacted. He said he was having mechanical problems.

Thursday, February 7

Hysterical screaming was reported by a woman when she phoned her daughter's residence. It turned out that the screaming was from the teenage girl, who had answered the phone and noticed that the phone cord was wrapped around a cat's neck.

Friday, February 8

Teenagers were reported hanging around a vacant house. The complainant said he saw a boy enter through the back door and leave via the front door.

In the 200 block of Caves Avenue at 1:34 A.M., a man was trying to hit people with his fists. The situation involved his girlfriend and another man who helped her move.

Saturday, February 9

It appeared that two juvenile boys were fighting in Cave Junction, but they were only "roughhousing."

An ex-husband showed up drunk at his ex-wife's house in the 27000 block of Redwood Highway and threw something through the window, then left.

Sunday, [illegible]

In Selma, a man said he told people he didn't want to sell his car radiator. Later, he saw them under his vehicle.

[Advice Column]

THE SURF DOCTOR'S Rx: SUTURE SELF

From the Surf Docs column in the June issue of Surfer, *a monthly magazine published in Dana Point, California. Responses to readers' letters are written by members of The Surfer's Medical Association, a San Francisco–based organization with more than 700 members.*

Dear Surf Docs:

I came to live in San José, Costa Rica, to study and find incredible surf. All that ended abruptly with a grave injury to the heel of my foot from the fin of the board of an out-of-control dude. A dude who wasn't a doctor put in two stitches, and then came the doctor who put in another six.

Four and a half months later I can't surf and can barely walk. At this point I'm very frustrated, and the growing insanity of needing to get wet is devastating me. Please tell me what to take, do, or just what's up.

—Buddy

Dear Buddy,

For every surfer who suffers a deep cut comes the inevitable question: To sew or not to sew? And underlying that question is the more fundamental one: What can I do with this cut that will have me back surfing as soon as possible? Buddy, you probably chose wisely in getting your cut sewn up; you just went about it wrong.

Your first mistake, and the first mistake of most surfers who get cut, was that you evidently didn't clean out the cut well enough. All cuts, even those that don't obviously need stitching, should be scrubbed out and flushed with gallons of clean water.

With all deep cuts, you need to use a good strong light and a cotton swab (or a clean chopstick, etc.) to probe for damage to tendons, muscles, nerves, bone, and blood vessels. A cut tendon will look like cut rope; a sliced muscle like sliced steak; a mashed nerve like mashed spaghetti; crushed bone like crushed surfboard foam; and, if a major blood vessel is involved, blood will pool where it is cut.

Assuming deep structures haven't also been injured, consider the following points in deciding whether to get stitched:

• Compared with sutured wounds, wounds that are left open will heal slower and leave a big-



This photograph, by Tina Barney, is one of nine that appear in Swimming, *a limited-edition book published by the Whitney Museum of American Art. Swimming, a collaboration between Barney and playwright Tina Howe, is part of the "Whitney's Artists and Writers, American Journals" series. Each volume in the series brings together an artist and a writer to observe an American location; this photograph was taken in a Rhode Island coastal town, where Barney lives for part of the year.*

ger scar but will become infected less often.

• Even large cuts can be adequately closed with butterfly bandages.

• Superglue can be used to close small razor-like cuts, but watch carefully for signs of infection afterward.

• Sutured wounds can be surfed with if thoroughly cleaned and dried immediately after surfing, but try to wait twenty-four to forty-eight hours. Butterfly-bandaged wounds aren't as easy to surf with: The butterfly strips come off, and open wounds hurt more when exposed in the ocean.

Although any surfer can learn to sew up skin cuts competently, they shouldn't try to sew up cut tendons or muscles. We think that's the second place you went wrong, Buddy. We suspect the dude who put in those first stitches didn't recognize a damaged Achilles tendon. That probably explains why you can barely walk. Fear not, though. A competent orthopedic surgeon should be able to repair it.

Buddy, even though good waves and good medical care can be found in Costa Rica, at this point you're not scoring either of them. It might be time to come home.

[Story]

BEACH REPORT

By Michael Wilding. From Her Most Bizarre Sexual Experience, *a collection of stories to be published this month by W. W. Norton. Wilding, who was born in England, lives in Sydney, Australia. This is his first book to be published in the United States.*

We woke up in the night when the whole house shook. At first we felt consternation. Not so much terror as consternation. The navy bombarding us with microwaves was one of our first thoughts. Then we decided it was probably psychic emanations from one of the local covens. We put up our own psychic counter-protection, checked that the garlic was still on the windowsills, and went back to sleep.

In the morning the landlord told us it was an earth tremor and we felt exhilarated. Then the afternoon papers said QUAKE ROCKS STATE and we felt even better. Now it was the beginning of the end. When the tidal wave rumors started we all went down to meet it. The wave. The state governor went down with us to assuage the rumors. He took a swim to prove

he wasn't concerned.

"Ah, Guv," we said, "you have us wrong, we [illegible]ncerned, we haven't assembled here [illegible]. Those in fear have taken to the hills." [illegible]oads to the hills were scenes of mass carnage as those in fear roared away from the coast and collided with those roaring in joyful anticipation to the beach.

All other things had failed us. Politics, we knew there were no politics, the elections were programmed by the big computers and fed to us on television. Space emigration, we knew there was no space emigration, it was all filmed in California or Arizona or somewhere. As for drugs, now we knew that the CIA had supplied all the acid and sprayed all the marijuana, we knew there was little to be gained from drugs. We tried planting our own but it was soon apparent the seeds had been genetically mutated. That's why there were always so many seeds.

So when the earthquakes came and the tidal waves were promised we felt, well, at least it will shake things up, this is the peak experience we've been waiting for, elimination now. Property values went up along the coast and harbor side. The chance of a ringside experience of obliteration was something the rich weren't going to pass up. A few survival freaks headed for the hills as mentioned before, the weak who will inherit the earth. We didn't want to be hanging out with them. Anyway, there was always the chance the hills would be as valleys and the seabeds as mountaintops so there was nothing certain about their calculations.

A few fights broke out on the beach between the love people chanting to avert the catastrophe and the majority of us who were peacefully waiting for it, but we kicked sand in their eyes and threw hot dogs and barbecued steaks and other fleshy substances at them and in the end they retreated. Peace was restored. We introduced buggy patrols.

Out beyond the surf was a flotilla of yachts where the rich were drinking gin and smoking coke. They figured to get it a few instants before us, but we'd have the added advantage of being pounded not only by the wave but by the broken bits of their boats and bones.

After a few weeks some people started getting restive. So when the big helicopters landed and scuffed up all the sand so it was like a desert sandstorm, they went to them in curiosity.

"Why wait?" the helicopter commanders said. "Why laze on the beach getting skin cancer when you could get an instant nadir in Europe? Come into the front line when we drop the big one. Or two. Skin cancer will have nothing on the total brain frying we can promise."

So a lot of people enlisted, getting bored on the beach, and they figured they might as well see Europe while it was still there, particularly if it was a chance to see Europe go up in flame and smoke; they'd always had this sense of unease about Europe, the heavy trip Europeans always pulled on us and also the feeling that it was such a black place it ought to go up in flame and smoke one day, it was only right. And to be there when it happened, to be participating in the holocaust in the dress circle, it was a once in a lifetime chance too good to pass up.

So that did thin out our numbers. The helicopters lifted them off. A few got instant nadir in the lift-off when some of the whirlybirds collided and burst into magnificent flame. It was quite exciting really, like a trailer for the big feature to come.

Then there was this great incandescence in the sea. This was a few months later. Time had pretty well stopped, so it's hard to be specific. But there was this great incandescence and then a ball of light in the sky.

"Wow," we said.

And these UFOs manifested themselves and descended to earth.

We gave obeisance.

"That's okay, earthlings," they said, "thanks for your obeisance but don't get sand in your hair, it'll get into the otherwise sterile environment of the saucer and louse up the antigravity devices."

"Do you mean—?" we said.

"Yes," they said. Speaking without mouths, right into our minds.

"We're coming with you—?" we said, mouthless also, mindless even, we heard ourselves saying it in their minds before we had even thought it.

It was so beautiful. Saucerlings to think for us. Now it was all beyond our control. It was what we had always dreamed, from the first primitive days of television what we had striven for, this surrender to a greater force, the dominance of the subliminal, the freedom from care and struggle.

"Up you get," they said, raising us all, halt and lame and limping and becrutched and all that, pouring space lotion on our sunburns and skin cancers, combing our hair that turned blond at their touch, fitting us with golden contact lenses for the outreaches of space.

As we stepped into the saucers we had a momentary twinge that we were going to miss the total annihilation by tidal wave. But it was only momentary. They promised us something even greater. Instant disintegration into particles of electromagnetic energy.

"Wow," we said, "the big O, the final solution."

And they were doing it all for us, for free, we didn't even have to lift a finger. ■

DOES THE WHITE HOUSE WANT A DOMESTIC POLICY?

Once upon a time, when America still had a two-party system, it was customary during moments of panic, recession, and general misery for the party in office to send forth from Washington a steady procession of new and presumably hopeful plans. That was then. Now, with a popular president and a nonexistent opposition, a polite silence has descended over the subjects of domestic policy. And so Americans today can read of White House officials describing their anti-poverty "initiative" as simply painting "the same toys . . . a little shinier" and listen to a State of the Union address that mentions a few minor proposals.

Can George Bush run and win again, as some of his advisers suggest, *without* a domestic policy, or must he at least take the trouble of appearing to have heard of such a thing? The question is entirely tactical. To acquaint our readers with the conversation in progress, *Harper's Magazine* recently invited several Republican politicians and thinkers to lunch and asked them to devise an agenda and to contemplate the political costs of having or not having a national domestic policy.

The following forum is based on a discussion held at the Tabard Inn in Washington, D.C. Jack Hitt served as moderator.

JACK HITT
is a senior editor of Harper's Magazine.

RICHARD N. BOND
is a partner in Bond-Donatelli. He was deputy campaign manager and national political director for George Bush during the 1988 presidential campaign and served as deputy chairman of the Republican National Committee from 1982 to 1983.

WILLIAM JANKLOW
is a lawyer in South Dakota. He was governor of the state from 1979 to 1986 and state attorney general from 1975 to 1978.

JACK KEMP
is the secretary of housing and urban development. In 1988 he was a presidential candidate, and he served as a representative in Congress from 1971 to 1988.

KEVIN PHILLIPS
is the editor-publisher of the "American Political Report." His 1969 book, The Emerging Republican Majority, *was described as the political bible of the Nixon era, and his most recent book is* The Politics of Rich and Poor.

JACK HITT: I recently read a poll showing that President Bush enjoys enormous public support. But the poll also revealed that a comparable majority of people, worried about a recession that is almost a year old now, believes the nation is hurtling in the wrong direction domestically. One could conclude from this evidence that the public blames someone else for the lack of a domestic agenda. So I wanted to gather a panel of Republicans to see if we could agree on what advice to give Mr. Bush for a postwar, pre-presidential-election domestic policy.

KEVIN PHILLIPS: Right off, I have a problem. Without judging the politics of everyone else here, I assume they are basically administration supporters. I am not. I can't give these people sincere advice. I *can* discuss these issues as someone who has previously had a role in the Republican Party. But I don't want to be seen as someone colluding or purporting to give advice.

WILLIAM JANKLOW: Now, that's a cop-out. Just because you give advice doesn't mean you're colluding. One of the great things about America, Kevin, is that we tirelessly give advice. The President has 250 million advisers.

JACK KEMP: Kevin just means he doesn't want to be seen in *Harper's Magazine* advising a Republican President when he's saving his good thinking for the Democratic candidate in 1992.

JANKLOW: Or he spent it all on Michael Dukakis.

HITT: I guess this answers my question about agreement on the Republican side of the aisle.

KEMP: Kevin, you needn't fear that anyone believes you are in the business of giving sincere advice.

PHILLIPS: I'll give you some sincere advice if you decide to run for president again, Jack. Don't do it!

KEMP: If you keep making the charges that supply-side economics doesn't work, which you did in your book, I may have to answer them by doing just that.

HITT: But my question remains unanswered: Why should a president have a domestic policy when the voters don't seem to hold him accountable for it?

KEMP: Okay, I'll take a shot. And, un-Kemp-like, I'll be brief. First, the White House is the epicenter of national policy. There are problems of poverty, despair, and economic decline in many people's neighborhoods, which the President has both a moral and a political obligation to combat. Second, this President has the chance of a lifetime to broaden the party and permanently cripple the Democratic coalition. He has the chance to unveil an inclusionary

politics that would appeal to Hispanic, black, Asian, Jewish, and women voters—those not traditionally thought of as Republican. This can be done with a domestic agenda of economic growth and opportunity in education, jobs, and home ownership. In other words, a conservative war on poverty is now a moral imperative. This country will not stand as a nation divided between abject poverty and surging affluence.

HITT: Rich, will that domestic agenda broaden the appeal of the party or water down President Bush's popularity?

RICHARD N. BOND: Strangely, it may do both. You have to go back to the practical issue here to see why we must have a clear, articulated national domestic policy: Last year, the federal, state, and local governments spent $1.8 trillion on domestic programs. That excludes defense and the national debt. Folks, this is where the action is! If we accept Jack Kemp's moral argument, then *not* to be there, where this much money is being spent, is foolish and ruinous. And, from a political perspective, two additional points: One, it is much easier, more useful, and less risky to talk about what *you* want to talk about than to hand over the national conversation to the Democrats; and two, if you want to broaden the party, stretch out its coattails, and pull in the Senate and increase GOP numbers in the House in 1992, you have to have a domestic agenda.



HITT: But, Rich, if Bush aggressively pursues a domestic agenda, won't he pay for it in the polls?

BOND: Absolutely. That's why the White House has to choose what domestic agenda it wants. Jack Kemp has floated out some ideas. So has Chief of Staff John Sununu. There is Secretary Lamar Alexander's education package. There is also Senator Malcolm Wallop and Congressman Tom DeLay's anti-recession agenda. And Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady's bank proposals. But the White House must decide which domestic items to get behind with the full force of the presidency. There are reasons why the administration is hesitating on all of them but education: The Wallop-DeLay proposals contain a capital-gains cut, and that brings up the fairness issue. Jack Kemp's proposals set them at odds with the liberal welfare crowd, and so far, there are more of them than us. The Brady bill opens the administration to charges of favoring big banks. So you look at them all, consider their price tags and the straitjacket of the budget agreement, and then decide. So far the administration has gone with Alexander's education package, because it contains few liabilities. But Bush has to pick the collection of policies on which he is willing to draw down political capital. So far he hasn't.

JANKLOW: Rich, there are two kinds of clergy in any church. One kind are custodians, who take over an established congregation and are perfectly satisfied to preach pabulum sermons every Sunday and to check the offertory plates for those big envelopes. Another kind are missionaries, driven to proselytize, to bring new people into the fold. I think that's the situation the President has to deal with. He needs to risk being unpopular, to do exactly what he did in the Middle East. There wasn't a poll around that gave him very high marks for what he was doing last fall. His guts told him to do it, and now history will be the judge. But the fact is, he didn't know going in where the American people would be when he came out.

PHILLIPS: Governor, Dick Darman, the budget director, has come close to saying what Jack Hitt said: that the President doesn't need a domestic agenda *at all*. The President's strong ratings have come exclusively from foreign affairs, particularly Panama and the Middle East. On the domestic side, the ratings are softer. And no one read the politics of domestic policy more poorly than Bush's aides in the White House during the budget battle of last October. They got their clocks cleaned. Their wariness of another domestic fight is easily understood. I think what they should do is

Illustrations by Steve Brodner

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[illegible] set of domestic proposals, with middle-class focus, that perhaps aren't *the* [illegible] but are at least a counter to the Democrats. My sense is that Bush's real [illegible] right now is this: maintaining the economic status quo, allowing more burdens to fall to the states, keeping top tax rates down on elite constituencies, and generally taking a conservative "don't get involved much" approach. Now, Jack Kemp doesn't take that approach, but the White House does. If the ratings stay high because of foreign policy, fine. But if the glow of foreign policy fades, what could recur is a domestic-policy debate in which the Republican Party is again perceived as standing for Park Avenue and Palm Beach. Let that happen and the party will get its head handed to it. So what it has to do is come up with more human side issues, whether or not they are sincerely believed by the White House all the time. I think that is what Jack Kemp is trying to say—without my cynicism of course.

KEMP: Political capital is either used or lost. You cannot just husband it.

BOND: But every time the administration goes to the Hill, it will lose, no matter how well conceived the policy is. I think you underestimate the problem any Republican domestic agenda will have with this Congress. With an imminent national election, with the Democrats on the run, with the Democrats lacking any credible candidate, with the Democrats fearing they might lose congressional seats if they don't have a strong name on the ticket, they will stop at nothing to discredit Bush and any Republican domestic agenda.

KEMP: But that's no excuse, Rich, for not having one. Look, President Bush won in 1988 on a promise to encourage growth by cutting the tax on capital gains, notwithstanding other issues.

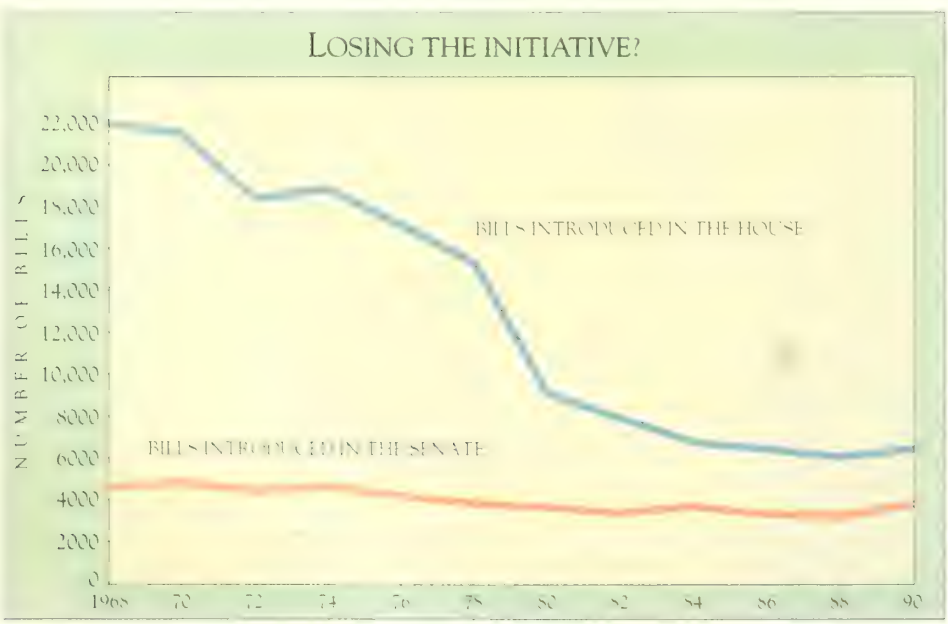
PHILLIPS: He didn't mention capital gains in the last ten days of the campaign, Jack.

KEMP: I was there many times and he never backed off the subject. But remember that the capital-gains tax cut passed the House, and even Majority Leader George Mitchell admitted it would have passed the Senate. I agree with you, Rich. Mitchell and Tom Foley and Dick Gephardt will make it an issue. That's why the President has to make his domestic agenda a national referendum on growth versus austerity.

BOND: Well, that's the problem. Remember, there were times during the Persian Gulf situation when Bush led public opinion without knowing how it was going to come out. That's the bold George Bush. On the other side, Bush used all the persuasive power of his presidency last year against the "good guys" in the House and Senate to ram a tax increase past them. He could have used those same powers to ram through a tax cut or at least hold off those who wanted to increase taxes. That's the other George Bush. Now he's got an imminent national election in front of him, with reapportionment to boot. If he wants to win, he can just coast. If he wants to change dramatically the standing of the party, from top to bottom, he can't do it without an agenda. Which path is the guy going to take?

JANKLOW: Bush has a domestic policy, Rich. I remember campaigning for the guy in my state. I remember him saying he wanted to be the environmental president, the education president. He said he wanted to see a "rural renaissance" and that he was going to lift the "life sentence" imposed on many in the inner cities. He *has* a domestic agenda. What he needs is a domestic Colin Powell.

PHILLIPS: Where's the money, Governor? You talk about education,



Graph source: *Congressional Record*

as has Lamar Alexander, but both of you neglect to mention that in state after state you have judicial rulings requiring equalization of resources. You now must spend equal amounts of money on poor and wealthy school districts. For this reason, and for reasons having to do with the recession, education is suffering a fiscal crisis at the state level, and Alexander's proposals suggest that the administration policy is to not get involved. A real education agenda requires bucks. I'm very dubious that this administration is going to put its money where its mouth is on these things. A certain amount of mouth is fine—and everyone does it when it comes to education—but will Bush put some real money there? I think not.

BOND: I think education has to be the centerpiece of this administration. Bush must fulfill his pledge to be the education president in straight political terms. He must begin to have a credible domestic agenda, and this could be a dandy. There are two periods when one can forcefully highlight this issue: in spring, around graduation time, and in the fall, around the time students return to school. This year, Bush gave a commencement speech in Michigan, which happens to be the place where John Kennedy launched the Peace Corps and where Lyndon Johnson launched the Great Society. This will get the White House through the early summer, when Congress takes a powder, attention shifts to recreation, and no one does much of anything. But come fall, the administration will have to decide what to do next.

KEMP: Any of these issues that we are talking about today—education, environment, day care—will serve as *part* of a domestic agenda. But there is only one winning platform, same as it ever was: peace and prosperity. We have made peace. Now we must put bread on the table and help lead an entrepreneurial expansion of the American economy. The secret of the 1980s, Kevin's myopia notwithstanding, was economic expansion. President Bush's domestic agenda must have at its heart a plan for restoring the economy's health. I disagree with my friend Michael Boskin, the President's chief economic adviser. I don't think the recovery will occur just by having the Fed goose up the money supply. Face it. The economy is in trouble—in the thrifts, the banks, the insurance companies, the real estate portfolios, the auto industry, and in the inner cities. The President has to go to Congress, and if he's turned down, then *that's* the issue for 1992. Here's the plan:

- Encourage long-term investment by individuals and business with a capital-gains tax cut and indexation. We are the only country in the world without an indexed capital-gains tax. Mexico has an indexed capital-gains tax. Japan and Germany have little or no tax on capital gains.
- Roll back the last couple of payroll tax increases.
- Double the tax exemption for children. This economy is inflating away the value of the dependent exemption.
- Create enterprise zones for inner city jobs and expand home ownership.
- Couple all this with a free trade zone with Mexico. With this policy President Bush can run on a ticket of peace and a plan for hemispheric prosperity. With that, we win.

PHILLIPS: Jack is right, tactically speaking. Education, environment—these are important. But even the Democrats have learned that these are not issues that will get you back into the ball game. You should always be able to best your opponents on these issues, but they're not the big beans in the count. Economics is the way to go, and I agree with Jack that the Boskin BS machine is working overtime on this issue. Jack is right on these points.

POLITICAL CAPITAL IS EITHER USED OR LOST. YOU CANNOT HUSBAND IT

KEMP: Suddenly I am having pangs of self-doubt.

PHILLIPS: Not to worry. Jack is wrong when he neglects to discuss whether the Republicans, with clean hands, can propose any economic policy. Many people, not just devoted Democrats, are ready to blame the Republicans for our fiscal crisis. One of the most interesting numbers to come out of the 1990 election was this: In the congressional races, 23 percent of Republican men voted Democratic, the highest in my memory. As for the recession, the strategy has been to gamble on the likelihood that the public would fold the recession into the Persian Gulf War. Had the recession ended in April or May, the Republicans might have gotten away with it. And they still may, if the Democrats counter with nothing. But once the recession stretches into summer, and you have problems stretching all the way into July, that might serve to delink the recession from the Persian Gulf. Eventually, if there is no uptick in the economy, the public will begin to make certain assumptions, and one of them is that the Republican Party deserves its label as the party of the guys with the big money. There is so much evidence of this—such as the administration telling the

IRS to lay off the tax returns of the upper class and audit the people in the middle, or the harping on ideas such as a cut in the capital-gains tax. New York, I know.

KEMP: Kevin, envy is not a good political posture for the Democratic Party.

PHILLIPS: Accuracy in describing supply-side cuts and concentration of wealth as an *excellent* policy.

KEMP: You're not one to talk about accuracy, because there's no accuracy in your book!

PHILLIPS: You're not one to talk about fairness, because there's no fairness in your tax policy!

KEMP: Kevin, I have run for office. You never have. I ran in Buffalo, which is a Democratic blue-collar area, and I've argued to lower the top tax rate to 25 percent ever since I started running—on the theory that the way to get more revenue is not to tax people the way Jimmy Carter did. I'd rather get 25 percent of the revenue of a lot of wealthy people than 70 percent of the wealth of almost no one. When the tax rates were at 70 percent, people were only investing offshore or in nothing but tax-free municipal bonds.

INSTEAD OF HAVING AN INSTINCT FOR THE JUGULAR, THE DEMOCRATS HAVE DEVELOPED AN INSTINCT FOR THE CAPILLARY

PHILLIPS: Now they are investing in LBOs and junk bonds.

KEMP: That's such a distortion, Kevin. The politics of envy does not beat the politics of growth. But if our party becomes the party of austerity and pain and sacrifice, then redistribution of wealth wins. I will grant you that. But if ours is the party that aims to produce a bigger pie, put more seats at the table, build a bigger table, create a growing economy by injecting our ideas into the inner city, we beat the Kevin Phillips model any day.

PHILLIPS: What about the greed issue, Jack? How do you answer the issue of greed?

KEMP: Kevin, you sound like Kitty Kelley.

JANKLOW: Kevin, it isn't that hard. Take education and the Democrats. You might criticize the Republican position. Perhaps it needs more work, whatever. But look at what the Democrats are countering with: They don't have a big-picture answer. It's not just Republican rhetoric when I say that the Democrats pander to special interests—teachers' unions, principals' demands, etc. They do.

PHILLIPS: Actually the Democrats' problem is that they address every issue piecemeal. One response comes from the education specialist, another from the guys associated with fiscal policy, then the leaders of the party have something else to say. The Democrats never present a coordinated reaction, so their beliefs will never cohere in the mind of the American public. These guys have no inkling how to achieve a common front that has depth on anything. Instead of having an instinct for the jugular, the Democrats have developed an instinct for the capillary.

HITT: Exactly. In fact, the opinion that America has no two-party system—that we have a single party espousing the same pro-business, anti-government line, with one faction permanently in charge of the White House and another permanently in charge of Congress—is no longer a cynical joke or the view of the lunatic fringe. My mother has adopted this line of thinking.

KEMP: But every once in a while a defining issue comes along that breaks up such political blocs. And we are on the threshold of one. Take trade in this hemisphere. Will the Democrats support the AFL-CIO's opposition to the George Bush proposal for a free-trade policy with Mexico? Consider that Pete Wilson won 47 percent of the Hispanic vote in California in his race for governor. If the Democrats continue to impede progress on trade relations, we have a chance to steal their voters. Recently, in a new black magazine called *Emerge*, Shirley Chisholm, who ran for president in 1972, said she was alarmed at how fast the registration of blacks in the Republican Party was proceeding on college campuses. She was worried. I think this is our opening.

JANKLOW: The war in the Gulf has helped us a lot on the fairness issue. We have dealt with race in this country mainly through stereotypes. You look at the black and white soldiers in the Gulf, and you are reminded that we are all on the same side. You look at the achievements of Colin Powell. We, not the Democrats, have the heat and the hope on this issue. This should be part of our domestic policy.

HITT: Jack, your proposals suggest that the Republicans turn the national debate to the subject of spending. Once you do that, don't the Democrats, by definition, win?

KEMP: The difference is between spending and spending wisely. Put this way, we can win. I think many on the left who bleed for the poor

would rather keep them poor or in perpetual poverty than move them out of it. The Democrats' plan is to give *more* welfare, *more* food stamps, *more* Aid to Families with Dependent Children, *more* public housing. We must say: Here is a different strategy—more choice on where you are going to live, how money can be used to rehab housing or for education. Here's a chance to own your own property, to have a stake in the private-enterprise system.

BOND: But, Jack, you still have to deal with an old problem. The *Time* magazine cover for Man of the Year—showing the twin faces of George Bush—was accurate. There is the guy who decisively wages war in the Gulf, and there is the guy who is forced to cut deals with the Democrats in Congress.



PHILLIPS: There is a duality. The polls show it, and Bush's skills reveal it. When you put Bush in an economic confrontation that involves privilege and wealth, he lapses into that "Andover-speak." He degenerates into preppy mannerisms and says things like "Read my hips."

BOND: By which he meant "Kiss my ass."

PHILLIPS: Yeah, but it's the same as saying, "Deep doo-doo." There simply isn't a more Waspy way of being.

JANKLOW: That's what Yale will do to you.

PHILLIPS: So in a sense, Jack, you are agreeing with the points in my book. The only way out of current problems is by having—

KEMP: A national referendum!

PHILLIPS: —a domestic policy built on economics. Maybe there is something in your position on capital formation, Jack. But a lot of what the Republican Party ends up doing, under the influence of the fund-raisers and contributors, is to *their* advantage, not to the benefit of the middle class, where it ought to be. The money boys have a lot of influence.

KEMP: I don't believe that.

PHILLIPS: Come on, Jack. Let's talk straight. They were all over the place last October during the budget fight, and they fumbled the ball then.

KEMP: You're obsessed with last October.

PHILLIPS: Is Jack Kemp lecturing someone on obsession?

KEMP: I *am* obsessed—with growth and equal opportunity! And I think the military victory in Kuwait does give us a good model, and we didn't have a great result just because there was more spending.

PHILLIPS: I disagree.

KEMP: I know you do. Because if we make the point that a military win in Kuwait means we can liberate the inner city, it's going to sound like all we're promoting is a Pentagon-style program, an industrial policy à la Kevin Phillips, Robert Kuttner, and Robert Reich—the liberal troika of economics. Sorry, can't resist. But here's the difference, Kevin: The military is socially and professionally mobile, and reveals to people the link between effort and reward. If the President took this simple yet profound idea—re-establishing a link between effort and reward for the poor—he would wipe up any Democratic candidate who was promising only more pork barrels and giveaways. Education takes a lot of effort, but there must be a reward. Eugene Lang of the I Have a Dream Foundation told kids that if they stay in school, stay drug-free, and qualify for college, he would pay for their education. Something like that changes people's behavior. You can make that link between effort and reward in education, housing, and in every aspect of American life. Our domestic policy offers each man and woman a chance to earn self-respect. That's all anyone really wants. That's why I talk about capital gains. I want to restore the reward for taking an entrepreneurial risk and creating jobs.

HITT: But isn't the Pentagon a funny model for Republicans to draw on? It is, after all, the largest quasi-socialist organization in America, a controlled environment from the top down.

KEMP: But it's [illegible] to *opportunity*, not to [illegible].

PHILLIPS: Jack Kemp has just endorsed mercantilism, orchestrated by the Pentagon.

KEMP: Just the opposite. I am a free trader.

PHILLIPS: A military mercantilist.

KEMP: That's an oxymoron. You can't be a mercantilist free trader, Kevin.

HITT: I understand that the domestic policy you are proposing is centered on economics and meritocracy, but what specifically is it?

BOND: Well, unfortunately, it's not "no new taxes." But there are other ways to push an economic-growth proposal. First, the White House should confer with Senator Moynihan and resurrect the Social Security rollback. After regaining ground on tax cuts, we should propose cutting capital gains to 15 percent. Then make IRAs more flexible, allowing for tax-free use of up to 25 percent of the deposits for health care or first-home buying or for higher education.

PHILLIPS: Of course, the White House opposed the Moynihan plan.

KEMP: Wait a minute, Kevin. Just what do you propose? What advice will you give to your candidate, Paul Tsongas?

PHILLIPS: Go back to your law practice. The country doesn't need another Greek liberal technocrat with heavy eyebrows. But to answer your first question: I can't support a capital-gains cut unless it is targeted to start-up businesses or aimed at the middle class.

KEMP: That's what it is, Kevin!

PHILLIPS: No, no, no. I propose that you cut the rate only up to $100,000.

KEMP: Oh. So the message is: We want you to get rich, but not too rich.

PHILLIPS: Exactly. You want them to get *rich* rich. You want concentration of wealth.

KEMP: No. I want poor people to get rich. I want them to get as rich as you.

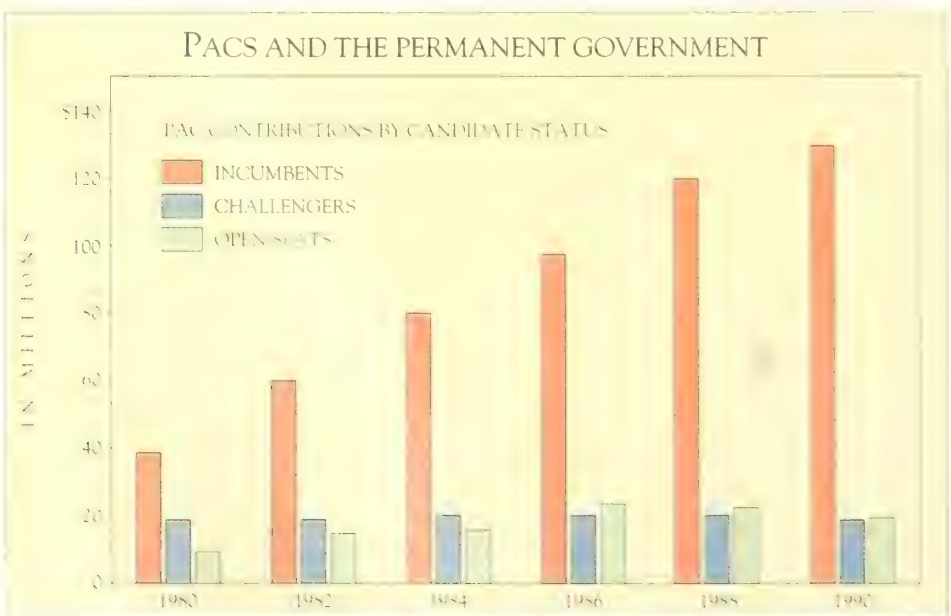
PHILLIPS: That won't take long.

KEMP: Kevin, you say soak the rich. I say, *get* rich. My message will beat yours any day in a presidential election. John Johnson put up his mother's furniture to start *Ebony* and *Jet*. He is now routinely listed among *Forbes*'s 400 richest men. Why should we say to a guy like Johnson, or a guy who has invented some microsystem or some new business, that there is a *limit* on his achievement? That is at such odds with the American dream.

BOND: Jack, we let that happen with capital gains. No one pointed out that the cut benefits the middle class as well. Because of the White House tactic—which made a deal with the Democrats not to lobby any one element of the package but only the entire package—not one op-ed piece or explanation of the capital-gains appeal to the middle class was put forth by the administration.

KEMP: Okay. I want to add a few things to my domestic agenda. Let me give it one more try:

- President Bush should talk about getting America growing and more competitive in foreign markets. As I said before, cut the capital-gains tax, lower the Social Security tax, and lower the cost of capital and labor.
- Then allow IRAs for first-home buyers; that has a populist appeal for those who want that first home.
- Take the position that any neighborhood that has been redlined—where banks have essentially said "no loans, ever"—would be "greenlined": We eliminate the capital-gains tax for businesses settled in those areas.
- And say to men and



Graph source: Federal Election Commission

women who live in such areas and take these new jobs that they can earn up to an amount greater than what they would be paid on welfare without paying income or payroll taxes.

The fact is, we have two economies in this country: a macrocapitalist economy and a microsocialist inner-city economy. We have too many people in poor areas who have never held a job. They don't know what a job is; they have no concept of private property. They're not in the game. Our domestic agenda has to be an invitation. The issue is how to make entrepreneurial capitalism—not corporate capitalism or Pentagon capitalism or Kevin Phillips or Kuttner capitalism—create more jobs and opportunity for minorities. Then Republicans would have the White House and a chance for the Congress for quite a while.

PHILLIPS: Curiously, though, Jack and I overlap on about 60 percent of what was just said. But Jack, come on, you have to admit that your package sounds like the Boss Tweed Relief Act of 1991. Of course you try to create more opportunity. But how do you target these minority people?

KEMP: You don't target the people—not blacks, not Hispanics, not quarterbacks, not economists. You target places where poverty is concentrated. In New Jersey it has worked in downtown Newark, Trenton, and Camden for former governor Tom Kean, who received 64 percent of the black vote in his last election.

PHILLIPS: Jack, this is how a lot of Republican consultants with an ability to get fast work make the deals. You see them in the HUD scandal, so it's a problem you're familiar with.

KEMP: Speak in the past tense, please.

JANKLOW: Kevin, that kind of corruption goes straight back to Lyndon Johnson and his television stations.

PHILLIPS: You're right. But my point is that the kind of situation Jack would set up is prone to that kind of deal making. You get a couple of people in a federal "greenline" zone, they set up some corporate shell and get a capital-gains exemption because of their location.

KEMP: But Kevin, thirty-seven states have enterprise zones. They have not had those problems. Look, I don't want to eliminate the burden on big business but on the men and women who start their own businesses.

BOND: These are great ideas, but I think we need to discuss a strategy to put them over. I believe all of you underestimate the obstructionism you face with a desperate and Democratic Congress. Perhaps you can do what Truman did in 1948 and declare them a do-nothing Congress and run against them. But I wouldn't. That's a tough message to make work. Instead, what about this: Split the Democrats down the middle and throw downfield. For example, remember Ed Jenkins, the Georgia Democrat? Ed backed the cut in capital gains for us and he took on the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Get Ed Jenkins in and form a Republican-Democratic coalition on the issues that will work with both of us. Sit down with Moynihan and work out a Social Security tax cut. Find the handful of issues we are compatible on, and then split the Democrats on those. Then send this economic message of opportunity, linked with real reward, as Jack has it, straight up the middle.

I KNOW THIS WILL SHOCK KEVIN PHILLIPS, BUT THE ONLY WAY TO CREATE MORE EMPLOYEES IS TO CREATE MORE EMPLOYERS

PHILLIPS: I can't disagree with the idea of an economic package. But I would put more emphasis on IRAs, for example, because I like the distribution better. It's upper-middle and middle class, and not a bailout for the LBO boys.

KEMP: IRAs don't create the jobs.

BOND: But they do give us a helluva hook, politically, Jack.

KEMP: I know this will come as a shock to Kevin Phillips, but the only way to create more employ*ees* is to create more employ*ers*. And the only way to create more entrepreneurs is to cut the tax on capital and labor.

BOND: Can I raise one point of pessimism? Right now, 165 members of Congress have to retire by the next election in order to keep their campaign chests; 111 of them are Democrats. Those who decide to leave have nothing to lose by being as obstinate and difficult as they can on the way out. I could be wrong, but I think we are facing enormous obstructionism next year.

JANKLOW: They won't keep their campaign money.

KEMP: Even those guys want public respect. I agree. They won't keep it.

JANKLOW: It isn't that much money, Rich. A few hundred thousand. They'll keep their jobs.

PHILLIPS: There is another aspect to the divide-and-conquer strategy. It works both ways. There are

[illegible] when the Democrats can pull Republicans across the aisle—getting tougher on Japan, family leave, a millionaire's surtax. [illegible] that 80 percent of Republicans favor [illegible]. There's an element of the Republican Party that can be splintered off as well.

[illegible] I think Kevin's right. Sununu has said he would [illegible] a millionaire's surtax down the Democrats' throat. But I think a majority of Republicans would sign such a bill.

KEMP: Nah. They might be nervous. But you could show that it would result in less revenue. A surtax is a tax on top of your taxable income. It is ruinous to the economy.

BOND: We do not want to be the little man on top of the wedding cake, as they said of Dewey in 1948. That's what we want to avoid. But this will be a second-term election. I think Reagan's 1984 campaign is a good model. He gave working people a sense of security, stressing the purchase of homes, cars, appliances, etc. Plus, his campaign promoted a sense of optimism and opportunity. We have to distill the best of that message and reinstill it in the American people. Consumers are scared. Bush's approval rating is down from 91 percent right after the war to 78 percent. There's a gravitational force at work here. You can expect his rating to fall even lower.

JANKLOW: Bush has to continue holding the confidence of the consumers. That's half the domestic policy right there. My beloved Jim McMahon, who played for my beloved Chicago Bears, was something of a screwball, but when he walked onto the field, people believed things could happen. Bush proved himself capable of this kind of optimism in the Gulf War. He can make things happen. His domestic policy has to reflect the same attitude.

PHILLIPS: And let me tell you why the chance to do that easily may have passed. The moment when Bush could have done something existed in March. A lot of the opportunity slipped away after that. He can try to promote a set of domestic policies—what I have said, what Jack Kemp has said, or what Rich Bond has said—but we all know that *that* is not his specialty. So now you've got to move Bush from something he does well to something he doesn't do well at a time when his ability to do it is fading.

KEMP: Okay. Kevin, I admit that the window of opportunity was open wide for two reasons: one, the popularity of the President; two, the Democrats' utter lack of an agenda. But the opportunity is not gone.

BOND: That was the brilliance of Reagan's 1984 strategy. Essentially, all he said was: We're going thataway! And everyone preferred that to the Democrats' incoherent agenda.

PHILLIPS: But one thing about 1984 is that Reagan didn't help Republicans in general. The re-election campaign in '84 was like the one in '72, which was like the one in '56. A president running on the platform of "more of same" can win, but it doesn't help in Congress. Moreover, you shouldn't rule out the possibility of unexpected change among the Democrats or the voters. When I was writing *The Emerging Republican Majority* in 1967, who would have believed that the next twenty out of twenty-four years would have Republican presidents? In 1929, no one would have believed that the country was heading toward twenty years of Democratic presidents. The fact that it's hard to believe that today's Democrats could govern anything is not necessarily a bar to their getting in!

KEMP: If the Republican Party had a more competitive position with minorities, it would help in the election of members of Congress. Henson Moore of Louisiana is one of a few senators I can recall—Mack Mattingly of Georgia, James Broyhill of North Carolina, Paula Hawkins of Florida, Jeremiah Denton of Alabama—who got 60 percent or more of the white vote and 1 percent of the black vote and lost. Forget the strategy of stitching together coalitions. Let the Democrats continue to fail on that. We should follow the Good Shepherd model, which is to bring more people into the party by example and the promise of respect and reward for work performed.

BOND: Jack, George Bush will get more black votes than any other Republican presidential candidate in modern history, but I'm not sure it will translate into congressional victories.

HITT: How does the bumper sticker read in 1992?

KEMP: "An American Renaissance."

PHILLIPS: Now, where did you get that from? I won't make a remark about your book.

KEMP: On sale everywhere.

PHILLIPS: In the remainder bin.

JANKLOW: If it's Al Gore's bumper sticker, it reads, "It's My Turn."

PHILLIPS: "The Rich Man's Liberation Front."

KEMP: "An Equal-Opportunity America, Equality of Opportunity for All Men, All Women, Regardless of Color, Race, Condition, or Socioeconomic Class, to Reach Their Potential as Human Beings and Children of God."

BOND: That's *some* car you're driving there, Jack! ■

IS RELIGION JUST FOR THE IGNORANT?



In many intellectual circles the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted and unlettered. Yet, recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, and amid inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious renaissance entail embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or superpatriotism. Nor does it imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, or human dignity. Rather, there's an awareness that, as Jean Bethke Elshtain put it, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political choices which are far more durable than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

The New York Times Magazine article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this return to religion, and rightly so. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments that yield humane social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as St. Francis, Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Tawney, Schumacher, Mounier, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Simone Weil, Martin Luther King Jr., and Archbishop Romero. And we probe the literary and philosophical riches offered by such greats as Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Waugh, Merton, C.S. Lewis, Walker Percy, Flannery O'Connor, and Graham Greene.

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THE LOYALLY COMPLICIT

Democrats wallow in centrism and bipartisanship

By Christopher Hitchens

On January 7 of this year the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee held a day of hearings on the recession and the unemployment it has brought about. The committee is dominated by Democrats, and the idea was to use C-Span—the cable network that provides coverage of Congress—to pin the recession on the Bush administration. Those scheduled to testify were also chosen with care; Senators Kennedy of Massachusetts, Simon of Illinois, and newly elected Wellstone of Minnesota listened solemnly as three handpicked victims of joblessness, all middle-aged, middle-class, and "non-threateningly" Caucasian, described the wasting of their lives and skills.

There was a glitch in the Democrats' plans, however. C-Span chose to skip the hearings of this committee for those of another—the Senate Ethics Committee. Here was something that might attract the daytime TV crowd: Five senators up to their thoraxes in greed, special pleading, and robotic indifference to the public weal. Four of them, as it happened, were Democrats: Alan Cranston (California), John Glenn (Ohio), Dennis DeConcini (Arizona), and Donald Riegle (Michigan). The most Republicanesque debauch of the Reagan-Bush epoch has undoubtedly been the savings and loan scandal, and the best-known characters in the cast are members of the "opposition."

It has taken a sort of genius to bring the Democratic Party this low. Elsewhere in the developed world a political revolution is under way, one whose philosophical core is marked by a distinctly North American impress. In what was once communist Europe, the most favored political term is "liberal"—*liberal* economics, *liberal* morality, *liberal* government. It is as self-conscious liberals that politicians like Václav Havel, the president of Czechoslovakia, and Miklos Haraszti, a leading M.P. in Hungary, first defeated the actual, barely existing state corporatists who ran and ruined their countries; and it is with speeches on the need for tough environmental regulation, the rights of women, the respect for minorities, and the freedom to choose one's own private life that they today oppose the resurgent "traditional" conservatives and nationalists. In two European bulwarks of real, existing capitalism, conservative titans of just a year ago—Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl—have fallen victim not to their own success (as they and their supporters wish to believe) but to the unceasing work of those who have the gall to call for higher minimum wages, better child care, and more progressive taxation. For the Labour Party in Great Britain and the Social Democrats in Germany, there is no need for internal party debate on the issues that matter: Children should not suffer first and most during an economic downturn; corporations should not be the chief arbiters of planning decisions that affect everyone's air and water.

Where could these people have gotten such ideas? Havel, for one, says the roots of his thinking lie in the civil rights and antiwar movements of the American Sixties. The liberal alliance in Hungary, between the Free Democrats and the Young Democrats, contains an *hommage* in each of the partner's names. I know British Labourites and German Social

Christopher Hitchens is the Washington editor of Harper's Magazine.

Democrats who speak with knowledge of the New Deal and the Great Society, and of the contribution to their own politics of such Democratic initiatives as affirmative action and an agency devoted to environmental protection.

And the "model" itself? Turning my gaze back to the city where I live, I glimpse a shabby, ashamed, compromised, and ramshackle apparatus. Its leadership, or what passes for it, still cringes at the ghastly drubbing it took because of the "L-word." Instead of affirming their liberal heritage, Democratic leaders outdo one another to disown or—as they say, slyly—"redefine" it. At party strategy sessions, places are set for speakers who warn privily that the party must preempt those Republicans who would, once again, seek to smear the Democrats by association with black America. Congressional leaders writhe as they present (once again) a civil rights bill; forgoing the grand idea of a contest with the currently primordial Supreme Court majority, or one more crucial battle against prejudice and discrimination, legislators boldly expound the bill's protections for—oh, let's say corporate females.



As for Operation Desert Storm, it is edifying to recall how the Democratic majority conducted itself over the course of a six-month national debate. First they mounted a tepid opposition to an American-led war in the Persian Gulf on that loftiest of principles, "timing"; then they speedily moved, circa 1/16/91, to drape themselves in bunting and claim Jimmy Carter as the patron of the Patriot missile, leaving themselves with nothing whatsoever to say about the "near-apocalyptic" damage (the UN's term) to Iraq's modern infrastructure wrought by U.S. bombers or about Saddam Hussein's reappearance as an executor (in both its modern and obsolete meaning) of an administration-accepted design for regional "stability." On the Gulf war, the Democrats offered not a choice or even a Republican echo but a dismal syncopation—all the noises coming at the wrong time and place, and still reverberating as an awkward silence began to blanket the Capitol.

The Democratic Party does not think, ergo it is not. This conclusion is not mine alone, but is apparently shared by the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Ron Brown—or so I'm led to conclude by the way he greeted a meeting of the DNC held at the Washington Hilton over a weekend in late March. The conclave had about it the atmosphere—formally meaningful, perfunctorily spirited, clotted with platitudes—that I associate with a wake for one long ailing and half forgotten. And Brown foreshadowed this perfectly in his written report to the assembled, which begins: "The Democratic Party is alive and well." A better indication of Brown's confidence in the party's vigor could be heard a month earlier, when he publicly gave thanks to his Maker that there had been no Democratic presidential candidates yet on the hustings during the Holy War for Kuwait—an astonishing admission that too much politics wasn't good for the politicians he leads.

Sensing, no doubt, that their party required more than the chairman's certificate of existence and sentience, other Democrats on hand at the Hilton, some among them perennial "hopefuls," "possibles," and even deep-background "mentionables," raised their reedy voices in uplift. Missouri congressman Richard Gephardt, who blames America's problems on Japan—another thing that separates today's Democrats from Europe's liberals is an attachment to chauvinism—will think hard before trading the cushioned place of House majority leader (and its line to the Speaker's post) for a second run at the presidency; but he must have thought he sounded presidential when he told the DNC crowd, "We've got the right message. We've got the right values. Republicans look at homelessness, joblessness, and hopelessness and say, 'We've never had it so good.' Democrats say, 'We can do better.' " A careful parsing proves he did not mean that the Democrats, given the chance, would deliver more homelessness, more joblessness, and

Illustrations by Steve Brodner

of those rash campaign pledges) more hopelessness.

Colorado senator Timothy Wirth, straining for rhetorical effect, sought to rouse the meeting with an appeal to "stop wailing and self-flagellating," these unmanly addictions representing to him that oxymoron, a "destructive quest." Offering consolation to the wailers, he drew from who knows where the assurance that "it's perfectly clear that there are issues out there that are *our* issues." Ah, yes, issues. They can be as difficult to confect as candidates. The DNC conventioneers wrestled with that toughest of issues—whether to campaign against free trade with Mexico—before unanimously agreeing to remain divided.

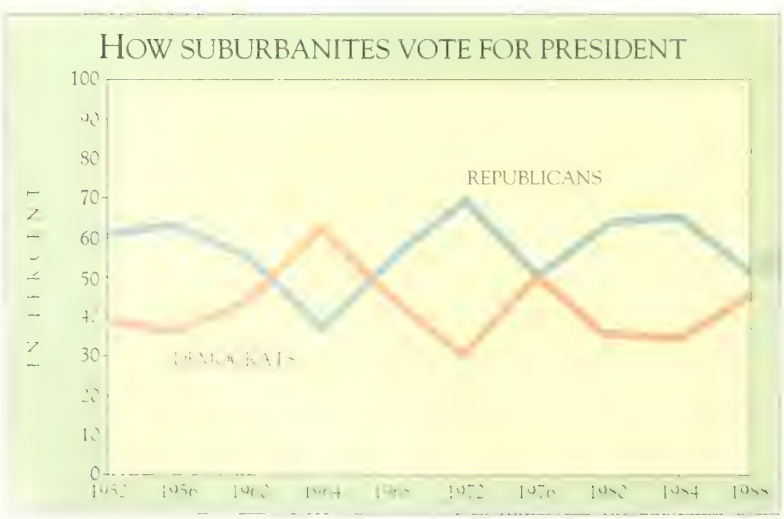
Anything more elevated than this would have inescapably brought these Democrats to such matters as race and class and power. There are two reasons for a party as etiolated as the Democratic to do all, with what strength remains, to make sure such matters do not come up. The party is queasily aware, in its typically unformed way, that Roland Barthes was correct when he said that "mythology, statistically, is on the Right." The totemic and subliminal aspects of race (as Lee Atwater so well knew) and war (as George Bush so well knew) are more naturally exploited by conservatives—not least if those who differ have lost their voices.

Moreover, as today's batch of Democrats understands perfectly, matters such as class and power require attention to first principles, and first principles have a way of complicating the approach—small-time, always tactical—favored now by the party's leaders. A defining moment, as we are supposed to say, occurred not long ago when House Speaker Tom Foley was being urged by some naive junior to denounce the President's pet domestic project—a cut in the capital-gains tax. The cut will save millions for the Donald Trumps, Foley was told, his pachydermatous ears reddening as he listened, and the average American taxpayer only $200. "Don't tell them *that!*" Capitol Hill's most powerful Democrat replied, startled by the heresy. "They'll all start asking where's their $200!"

A national political party can suffer intermittent trouble with either its spine or its brain, but it cannot long persist as mindless and invertebrate. There exists a growing tendency among Americans to turn off the respirator to which the Democrats cling. They have not won a presidential election since 1976. The American people have not truly affirmed a Democratic nominee—in the sense of endorsing programs and policies—since 1964. (Jimmy Carter ran against Watergate.) That they have not run a campaign on first principles since 1964 may have something to do with this, though you would not have found a Democrat at the DNC get-together who believes this, or would have said so if he or she did.

In 1992, the Democratic presidential candidate will very probably face an electorate that identifies itself mostly as Republican. Party identification must be counted among the political vital signs—if not the one vital sign—and most polls show Democratic identification to be trailing Republican among registered voters. Only three times since the first years of the New Deal has this been the case, and at each of these moments the Democrats have had the good luck to have the Republicans foul their own nest—the Watergate affair, the 1982 recession, the Iran-Contra affair.

According to some party strategists, what the Democrats need for '92 is what they needed in '88 and '84 but did not get—a long recession. Reflect just a moment: Is this not the *twelfth month* of a recession? Recession, alas, was one of the few issues the Democrats at the Hilton found no time to discuss. They presumably saw—if C-Span viewers did not—what happened on the one occasion when a few party throwbacks took a stab at raising the subject.



On one wall in the office of Albert Gore, the forty-three-year-old junior senator from Tennessee, there are four photographic portraits. These, he says, represent his political and personal heroes. The pictures, in alphabetical order, are of Rachel Carson, Cordell Hull, Chico Mendes, and Yevgeny Yevtushenko. It's not a bad "mix," suggestive at first glimpse of concern, seriousness, and breadth. From photos two and four one might sense a staunch interest in national security

Source: American National Elections Studies Data Source Book, 1952–1980, and ABC News/Washington Post exit poll

and foreign policy; from one and three one gets the softer impression of a man aware of the plight of Third Worlders and of the earth's fragile environment. But what, at second glance, could possibly connect a Green pioneer, a leathery diplomat and imperial crisis-manager, a Brazilian-Marxist labor organizer, and a Muscovite literary opportunist?

Pressed lightly on this question, Gore smiled easily and allowed as how his true "political lineage" descends mostly from Hull, who, like himself, was from Carthage, Tennessee, and believed in an activist government—that is to say, occasionally active at home and hyperactive overseas. Gore's gravitation to the Hull photo did not exactly startle me, but it did confirm that the three other pictures were hung—like the numerous graphics of Spaceship Earth adorning the other walls—to give an impression of liberal compassion.

The "smart" people (*why* are they called such?) in Washington tend to the view that Al Gore will seek and obtain the 1992 Democratic nomination for president. A conversation with your tough-minded, wised-up party insider unfolds much like this: A swift once-over, to begin, on Gore's showing during his first run for the presidency in '88, when he abandoned a perfect liberal voting record in the Senate (according to the *National Journal*'s 1987 measurement) in order to impersonate Henry "Scoop" Jackson or the hardly less forbidding figure of Senator Albert Gore Sr., talking tough about the Russian Bear and the need for peace through strength. On Super Tuesday such repackaging gave him first place in five Southern primaries and second in five others. Knowing (that is, being advised) that the Dixiecrat routine would not play in Illinois, the site of the following big primary, Gore assumed the hard hat and lunchpail and went off the screen in the wrong direction. That was that—if you do him the large favor of forgetting the New York primary, where he appeared to be running for a seat in the Knesset.

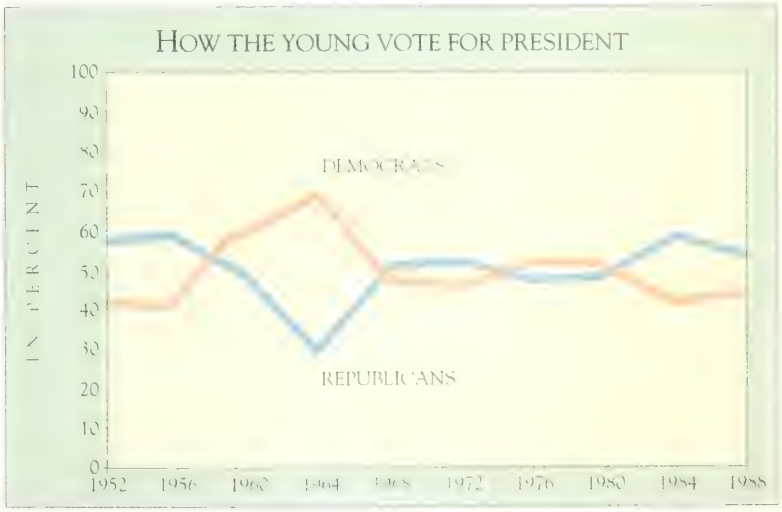
Mr. Mover will then shake a little before moving along—but not out of New York. What are Governor Mario Cuomo's chances of getting nominated? A Democratic big-city type with a multibillion-dollar deficit? Don't make me laugh! Either he raises taxes, giving Bush a laugh line, or he cuts services and entitlements, ruining his "compassion" bit in the primaries. Hey, but the compassion stuff is out anyway. You talk compassion, people see underclass blacks, the homeless, AIDS victims—in the same picture with *our* guy!

So Cuomo's in a bind. Ditto New Jersey senator Bill Bradley—New Jersey's got a revenue fiasco, too, one that nearly cost Bradley his Senate seat last November. Nebraska senator Bob Kerrey lost his chance wagering his Vietnam Medal of Honor both ways on Desert Storm. And the Reverend Jesse Jackson, having chosen not to run for the one job—that of Washington mayor—he could have won, has since shown too great a fondness for a seat at the Democrats' favorite table, the trough.

Gore, now. Gore has brains. He's engaging, if a bit wooden. Okay, make that very wooden, but that can be worked on. Good on details. Who knows, it may not be bad, this thing he has for the ozone layer. It brings money from the cause-types and brings out the college volunteers you want for the primary in New Hampshire. If you get him through the primaries with the Green stuff, you move him to the center: The stint he had in Vietnam, the January vote in favor of going sooner rather than later to war in the Gulf, an arms controller but no sissie. Okay, his wife's not any liberal's cup of Lapsang Souchong, but think of the family-values blue-collar appeal—and where else do the libs have to go, anyway?

Throughout the spring, when I was having so many of these chats, I would bring an end to discussion by mentioning that the only announced Democratic presidential candidate was *another* Greek from Massachusetts (former senator Paul Tsongas) and the only founder of an "exploratory committee" a man who is trying—lots of luck; is this a great country or what?—to be the first ever black Dixiecrat (Governor Doug Wilder of Virginia). A quick glance at the watch, a more pleading intoning of *Gore*, and my guest would be gone.

It was such intoning that led me to Gore's office, and then led me to ask him one question in particular: How would he define the essence of being a Democrat? I also requested that the answer be expressed in terms that could not be used by a Republican. So he did



Graph based on exit polls of voters ages 18–33, and varying slightly from year to year. Sources: American National Elections Studies Data Sourcebook, 1952–1986, and ABC News/Washington Post exit poll.

ay—at once, smiling—that the Democratic Party stood for moving the country forward. What he did say, after a pause, was this:

> There's a level of trust in the individual and a level of concern for the individual. Both parties are willing to take risks, but the Democrats are more willing to trust the individual when it's a question of property, wealth, and rights.

As I struggled to regroup, I recalled the scene from the movie *Taxi Driver* in which a lovelorn idealist campaign worker, played by Albert Brooks, loses his temper with a delinquent printer of lapel buttons. "Our slogan—and what we asked for—is '*We* are the people,' " Brooks complains. "These say, 'We *are* the people!' Oh, you don't think there's a difference?" Gore was echoing exactly what a Republican might have said if asked, at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon, for a "from-the-gut" statement of belief.



In a subsequent discussion, Gore went on in much the same way. Having all these years promoted higher take-home pay and living standards for their working-class and poor constituents, the Democrats had "moved things upward"—and thus had moved their voters into the ranks of Republicans. The Democrats, I should understand, were victims of their own success. It was time for the party to ratchet up, too—to begin articulating the plight of the middle class. Which Gore did, not long after our meeting, unburdening himself of a speech that included the following: "Middle-class families pay more taxes than they ever have, and the average weekly wage, after taxes, is lower now than it was in 1959." Thank you, Mr. Reagan.

At one point near the end of this discussion, Gore became so involved in his own explanation of the ozone peril and the impact of industrialism on the earth's fragile ecosphere that he sprang up, walked quickly to the next room, and returned with a chart mapping the exponential nature of the crisis. I was impressed, as I was meant to be, but not so much by the energy of the performance as by the realization that Gore was within an inch of unconsciously making another point—one about the limits not of development but of politics as now practiced. Here, in his hands, was ineluctable proof of what Democrats used to exist to point out: Some problems—in fact, all the real problems—are not individual. They are *social*.

In his fight for his party's presidential nomination (should he seek it), Gore will find his base of support among members of the Democratic Leadership Council, essentially a Southern wiseacre group founded in 1985—Georgia senator Sam Nunn played a leading role—and dedicated to the proposition that political power grows out of the barrel of a highly subsidized high-tech weapons system. Or, to phrase it somewhat differently, the DLC thinks the Democrats are "perceived" not so much as pink as yellow.

This is one of those insights that seem to me more conventional than wise. Even by the crude measurement of the opinion poll—which the DLC uses in all its calculations—there would appear to be scant evidence for unappeasable public hawkishness. Reagan's first term was marked by mass unrest over the nuclear-arms buildup; his second, by public pressure to get an arms treaty with Gorbachev. Opinion, as deduced by the pollsters, ran two to one against the U.S.-sponsored sabotage of Nicaragua even before the Iran-Contra revelations—revelations as to the hawkish state-sponsored sabotage of the U.S. Constitution.

How much better has Bush done in this regard? DLC types—there are about 500 elected officials nationwide affiliated with the group—are in awe of his performances in Panama and Kuwait, and speak in respectful tones of Gore's "invulnerability" on this score. But who, exactly, *is* vulnerable? The Noriega trial is about to taint the Panama "triumph" for those who recall it at all, and a Gallup poll in late April found that a majority of Americans no longer believed the Gulf War was a victory for the United States. People endorsed the war to get precisely what they wanted—the safe and speedy repatriation of the troops. The troops are heading home, and America is

back home with them.

The DLC had a convention in Cleveland not long after the Gallup poll on the Gulf was released and, undoubtedly with those numbers firmly (but, as ever, temporarily) in mind, did pull itself up to discuss the domestic front. The substance of the discussion, however, turned on other numbers. One, derived from the 1990 census, holds that in November 1992 the majority of those who will vote will be living not in cities or in rural towns but in the suburbs. The thinking among DLCers is that people who live in the suburbs like to pay taxes only to buy local services—schools, garbage collection, and so on—and think federal programs service somebody else. Looked at another way—that is, through yet another set of numbers—DLC types note that Michael Dukakis attracted only 43 percent of those voters we describe as "middle class": those with family incomes of between $20,000 and $50,000 per year. They, it is clear, don't like candidates who speak for . . . well, *them*.

Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas, the chairman of the DLC, star of the Cleveland convention, and a dark horse for the '92 ticket, sought to frame his group's "vision" when he declared that a Democratic administration might "take money from middle-class taxpayers and give it to *other people* who need it if we also require *them* to behave responsibly with the money we give *them*." (Italics mine.) Some on hand in Cleveland—among them corporate lobbyists who were permitted to vote on the convention's resolutions—thought Clinton was still stuck in the past and were at pains, as the DLC platform puts it, "to assert American values at home." In other words, there should be at least one part of America—the inner city—where we still demand thrift, discipline, and the postponement of gratification. Indeed, during the very days of the DLC conference, my street in Washington was under curfew because it abuts the ungrateful Latin Quarter where unpardonable disorder erupted in the wake of a police shooting.

What we have from the DLC is an old gambit, one that continues to attract politicians despite the fact that it does not work. The thinking goes this way: One wins a presidential election only by adopting the slogans and strategy of the candidate who won last time. You don't so much try to accrue votes as to subtract them from the other guy—in this case, the Republican guy. There are two assumptions here never challenged by those who hold to the Subtraction Theory of Campaigning: 1) That the political attitudes of the voting public one is seeking are constant and not prone to change through persuasion; 2) That your own traditional constituency will simply go along with your wooing of another, and continue to vote for you quietly and in large numbers.

Unfortunately, one can hold these assumptions only as long as one ignores history—something a political consultant might pull off, but not a political party. In pondering such things, I found it interesting to talk recently with Harry McPherson, a Washington attorney and lobbyist who came to the nation's capital to work for Lyndon Johnson when he was majority leader in the 1950s and who later served as Johnson's White House counsel during the period of the Great Society. McPherson is actually one of the founders of the DLC—a centrist—but his approach to government and politics, at least as it came across in our chat, seemed quite different from that of Gore, Clinton, et al.

"Nixon used to say—probably [William] Safire wrote it for him—that he and his party had 'the lift of a driving dream,' " McPherson told me. "Whatever that is, [Democrats] haven't got it now."

McPherson went on to say that what he finds lacking is any "sense of an activist party that wishes to *use* government"—this, of course, having been the lift or drive or dream of the Democrats since FDR's campaign in 1932. Even in defeat, McPherson noted, the Democrats of the 1940s and 1950s had kept to principles—and eventually won elections and pushed through their programs. He spoke of the congressional elections of 1946, which the Republicans won. "Well," he said, "during the Eightieth Congress in 1947 and 1948, Harry Truman was able to regroup and run against the 'do-nothing Congress.' The Democrats overcame the reaction against thirteen years of the New Deal and the Fair Deal and what was then called 'liberal statism.' " And during the Eisenhower years, McPherson continued, the Democrats never lost this essential understanding of who they were—"We didn't waste them," is how he put it. He explained that many of the issues that would become *their* issues in the 1960s—Medicare, voting rights—had their roots in those years the Democrats did not control the White House.

THE DLC THINKS THERE SHOULD BE AT LEAST ONE PART OF AMERICA—THE INNER CITY—WHERE WE STILL DEMAND THRIFT AND DISCIPLINE

As I spoke with McPherson, who is no more a starry-eyed idealist than any other LBJ soldier, it was the sense of continuity and maturity that struck me—a sense notable among Democrats today only by its absence. Where is the Democrat who can dig beneath the thin

[illegible] of [illegible] measurement, who can plant a tree that might take years to grow and bear fruit? The public the Democrats built for the Great Society was essentially those constituents who'd backed the New Deal, plus blacks, plus white suburbanites who were cultivated, nurtured, brought along to understand what needed to be done—and that only government could do it. That building process was a matter not of this term but of the long term. Without attention paid to the long term there will not be [illegible] in 1992 or anytime after that—the ushering in of a Democratic presidential term.

Where the Democrats are now with regard to the White House—nowhere—is a function of where they have been all too happily for all too many years: up on Capitol Hill. Today, the nation's Democratic leadership amounts to its congressional leadership, and the congressional leadership has no real interest—in any sense of that word—in battling for or, God forbid, seeing elected a Democratic president. The Democratic Party is the congressional party, and that suits the leadership just fine.

The congressional party has its roots in the Watergate affair, when Democrats on the Hill forced Richard Nixon to resign in the face of impeachment. The result was a weakened presidency and one Gerald Ford, who from the beginning was all too happy to leave much of the stuff of governing—initiating policies and so on—to the Democratic Congress. Ford had barely been in the White House two months when he was sent and dutifully signed the Federal Campaign Reform Act—legislation that, as we now know, did not so much ensure cleanly fought and funded presidential campaigns as it ensured that congressional Democrats could cling to office whether or not their party put their man in the White House. The legislation "reforming" campaign funding authorized political action committees (PACs), armatures of interest groups that collect monies from their members and contribute these funds largely to congressional candidates and largely directly to them, bypassing the party itself.

THE WORD "BIPARTISANSHIP" ACTUALLY MEANS ALL MANNER OF GOVERNING MOST ACCURATELY CAPTURED BY THE WORD "COMPLICITY"

The PACs—there are 4,000 of them, and last year they spent $150 million on House and Senate candidates—don't care about parties as such; they care about incumbents, about those who remain on the Hill and roll up seniority and get to be key lawmakers on key committees. There are few Democrats indeed who do not chair some or another congressional committee, subcommittee, or select committee. In last year's elections—in which the Democrats maintained control of both the House and the Senate—only 1 Senate incumbent and 15 of the 406 House incumbents who stood for reelection were voted out. And last year, two thirds of the PAC money that went to incumbents went to Democrats. Hey, who needs a Democrat in the White House?

This corruption—in every sense of *that* word—can be glimpsed most starkly by looking back to the late Seventies, when a Democrat did sit in the White House and the Democratic leadership on Capitol Hill felt most threatened. For the congressional party—its ranks swelled by the '74 and '76 elections, its coffers bulging with fresh PAC funds—Jimmy Carter was a nightmare. He moralized about interest groups. He made noises about trimming the pork barrel that incumbents swap for PAC loot. Even before the Republicans got to Carter in the general election, leaders of the congressional party had engineered his undoing—drafting one of their own, Ted Kennedy, to run against him.

The Bush presidency has been for the congressional party a kind of return to the golden era of Ford. One once again heard the word "bipartisanship," by which is meant backroom decision-making, mutual soft-peddling and covering-up, and all other manner of governing most accurately captured by the word "complicity." Actually, this renaissance dawned much as the happy time of Ford did—with a Republican president caught in an unlawful act. The Iran-Contra scandal was fraught with impeachable offenses, but the Democratic leaders on the Hill wanted none of that. Look what happened the last time the Republicans left the White House! They wanted, and they got, a congressional investigation that did just enough to reestablish the balance of power along Pennsylvania Avenue—a balance thrown off rather scarily in 1980, when not only did the Carter they'd weakened lose to Reagan but the Democrats lost their Senate majority. (They got it back in '86.)

Bush, of course, is as comfortable with the congressional party as it is with him. When the S&L scandal emerged, and his son Neil was found to be in the thick of it, the President could count on the congressional party to muffle the issue—four of the Keating Five, after all, were Democrats. When, this spring, the mainstream media began paying attention to reports that the Reagan-Bush campaign had arranged with the Iranians to delay the release of the hostages until after the 1980 election, he could count on the congressional

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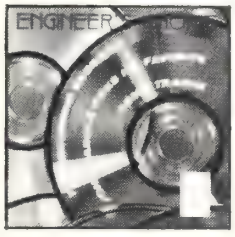
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party to take a quiet, leisurely look into whether, at some time in the future, a panel might be . . . When the "education president" appointed Lauro Cavazos as his first education secretary—filling quotas, Republican-style—and then offered no policies, the Democrats on the Hill said nothing; when the education president finally announced his "choice" policy in April—a policy that, in effect, compassionately subsidizes the prep-school bound—Speaker Foley called a press conference to say "thank you."

The congressional party is fat and contented with things as they are. (Any Democrat running for president in '92 will have to battle on two flanks.) But decadence is a quite fragile thing. Anything corroded eventually collapses, as congressional party stalwarts Jim Wright and Tony Coelho were surprised to discover. Of course they were simply replaced with kinder, gentler types. But three forces could hasten the downfall of the party of the Hill. One is Reagan's legacy to them: The 1981 economic program, which the Democratic-controlled House voted for, and which, as only New York senator Daniel Moynihan, among Democrats, seems to understand, was a deliberate ploy on the part of David Stockman to create not "supply-side trickle down" but a government permanently burdened with a huge budget deficit. (Anyone doubting conservative uses of the deficit might pick up the Spring 1991 issue of *Policy Review*, the Heritage Foundation journal, and turn to the interview with Senator Phil Gramm, the Texas Republican. "I was concerned," he says, "that the so-called peace dividend would be used to fund a new wave of domestic spending. Instead, all of the defense reductions will go to deficit reduction.") Reaganomics has meant less and less money for pet programs and new initiatives—which translates as fewer and fewer reasons for PACs to throw money at incumbents.

HOW BAD WOULD IT BE IF NEXT YEAR THE DEMOCRATS NOT ONLY FAILED TO REGAIN THE PRESIDENCY BUT LOST CONTROL OF CONGRESS?

There is, too, the matter of a neat little vote taken a few years ago that will allow House members in office before 1980 to retain their "campaign war chests"—a sweet expression—if they retire before the end of their current term. Of the sixty-one representatives who would clear more than $250,000 by doing this, forty-five are Democrats. This means that in the year of a presidential election there could be a serious creation of open seats by those deciding to take the money and *not* run.

There is also the fact that ideas and ideals do count. It is difficult, as recent elections prove, to motivate voters to vote without some appeal to what they understand to be their better selves. Young voters—whom the Democrats, as recently as the 1960s, knew grew up to be the most consistent voters—are in particular drawn to a party with a Big Picture. Not surprisingly, that party today is the Republican. A Times Mirror poll taken in March found that those under thirty prefer Republican candidates to Democrats in their congressional district by a two-to-one margin.

The Free and Young Democrats of Hungary, Havel and his Civic Forum, Labour in Britain, and the Social Democrats in Germany have more in common than their liberal ideas and programs. All have been and, with the exception of the Civic Forum, all remain *opposition parties*. Out of power they found out what they stood for, and thus what might return them to government. This, of course, works not only for liberals. The roots of Reaganite conservatism—tax cuts, a shrinking of the welfare state—lie in the defeat of Barry Goldwater in 1964.

How bad would it be if next year the Democrats not only failed to regain the presidency but lost control of Congress? It is a notion I am reluctant to entertain (a gun in every house? a prayer in every school?) but increasingly reluctant to dismiss.

The Democrats, in total national defeat, would lose the ability to shake down interest groups, and maybe shake their addiction to them. Those left on the Hill might cease to have their parochial interests considered by a Republican president, and thus might think twice about, say, defense proposals they inevitably end up endorsing with a few squeals and pork-barrel grunts. The long-promised reappraisal of outlook and direction, silenced for the sake of "unity," could grow noisy and widen beyond the Beltway. The dread "bipartisanship," which has become a code word for "off-budget" spending and other perversions not envisioned by those who fashioned the system of checks and balances, would have all the profit leeched from it.

An argument, then, not for "the worse the better" but rather for, eventually, the return of politics—for the science of debate and combat to replace the art of the deal. May a Democratic presidential hopeful emerge from nowhere and run *against* the party oligarchs on the Hill. May the Republicans in Congress expose their Democratic brethren—and be left alone to defend their policies without the hired help. At the risk of tautology, the two-party system requires two parties. ■

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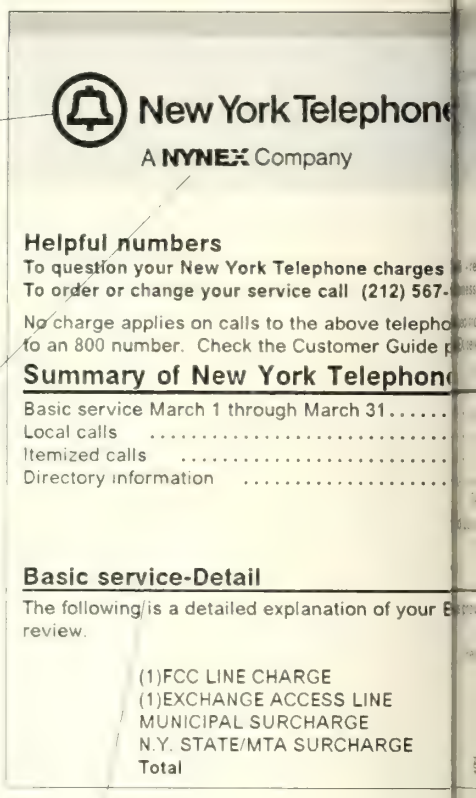
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RINGING U

How local phone companies tou

Once upon a time, my phone bill, like yours, came from the Bell System, the benevolent giant that reached out and touched us all. But in 1984 Ma Bell was ruled an unfair monopoly and was broken into seven regional holding companies (RHCs), such as NYNEX. We were promised the benefits of competition. What we got were strange new hybrids—in part, regulated local phone monopolies serving the public; and, in large part, unregulated corporations serving RHC shareholders. Are RHCs fulfilling their mandate to provide us with efficient telephone service at a fair price? Dial again.



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To question your New York Telephone charges

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Itemized calls .....
Directory information .....

Basic service-Detail

The following is a detailed explanation of your B
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(1)FCC LINE CHARGE
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N.Y. STATE/MTA SURCHARGE
Total

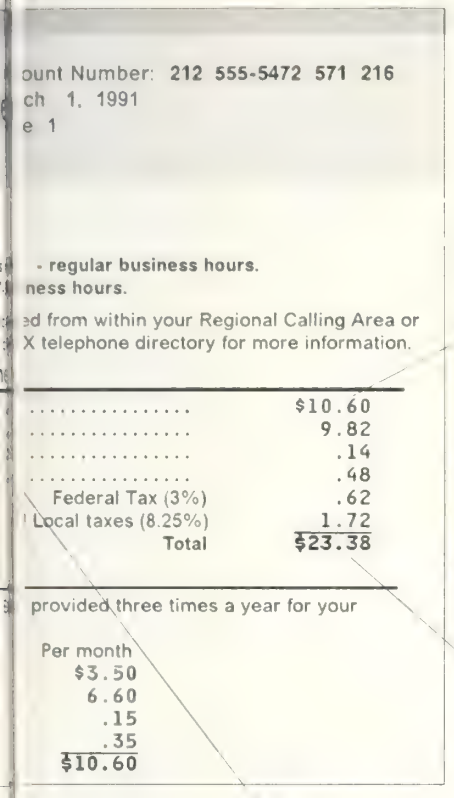
NYNEX, like other RHCs, owns many other companies, some unrelated to communications and unregulated. In addition to New York Telephone and New England Telephone and Telegraph, NYNEX holds Yellow Pages companies, office buildings, and subsidiaries that manufacture automated fare systems for airport parking lots and mass transit lines. (US West, another RHC, has a $1.4 billion real estate portfolio; Pacific Telesis, a $475 million one.) But herein lies temptation: RHCs can increase the profits of unregulated subsidiaries by furtively and illegally (through sweetheart deals and creative accounting) shifting monies around *within* the companies they control. The Federal Communications Commission found that New York Telephone and New England Telephone had overpaid their own affiliate, Materiel Enterprises, by $118 million, resulting in overcharges to customers of $35 million. New England Telephone also was found by the Massachusetts Attorney General to have transferred real estate to a NYNEX Yellow Pages subsidiary at below-market value. And the Wisconsin Public Service Commission found that Ameritech, which runs phone companies in the Midwest, charged the entire annual budget for Ameritech's headquarters to telephone customers. The PSC subsequently disallowed $33.6 million of these charges.

Understanding phone charges is no easy matter. The brief accounting of the basic service I receive is a virtual study in obfuscation. Each figure is based on information provided to regulators by the phone company. Yet the billions of transactions within RHCs make it difficult even for regulators to determine which monies are actually spent to provide phone service and which are not. In 1988 Ameritech was caught charging customers for the Ameritech Senior Golf Open. Likewise, ratepayers unknowingly opened their wallets for the BellSouth Pro-Am Golf Tournament. Such events are typically schmooze-fests for company execs. Finally, the FCC found five of the seven RHCs guilty of billing their national and local lobbying expenses to consumers.

Michael Moynihan is the author of Lon[illegible]n Confidential, *a mystery, and writes frequently for business publications.*

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The charges are going up. New York Telephone recently won a $250 million boost, driving up the cost of my service by 8 percent. Other RHCs are seeking hikes, too. Since 1984, the average local phone bill has risen 56 percent more than inflation. This increase occurred while new technology should have *cut* costs, as it did to long-distance rates, which have dropped 31 percent in the same period. The price of phone equipment has also plummeted now that Western Electric no longer makes every phone in America. Perhaps I shouldn't be surprised. RHCs are in business to make money: Their stocks have performed extraordinarily well. NYNEX, for example, has returned an 18 percent yearly yield, without dividends, since 1984. That's spectacular even for the Eighties, but less than other RHCs.

Unlike many consumers, I don't pay a "wire maintenance charge" as part of my basic service fee. By agreeing to maintain within my apartment the wiring and jack—inexpensive items found in any electronics store—I've removed the wire-maintenance charge from my bill, as, indeed, can anyone. The phone company doesn't publicize this option. Small wonder. My annual savings come to $11.88, which, multiplied by millions of ratepayers, is a lot of money. I also keep my charges down by not having tone dialing or features such as call waiting. Though tone dialing costs phone companies less to operate than the older pulse dialing, they continue to charge extra for it when not regulated otherwise. New York Telephone would get $1.53 per month plus a $10 "installation" charge to let me use the new, cheaper technology. Although phone companies claim that profits from such gambits go to improving service, profits can also underwrite unregulated ventures, some of them abroad. Bell Atlantic and Ameritech have signed deals in New Zealand; Southwestern Bell in Mexico; Pacific Telesis in Germany; US West in Czechoslovakia.

The profits from customers like me hardly excite the RHCs. Far more glamorous are new technological ventures, some of which take advantage of the RHCs' huge databases of customer calling patterns. Some RHCs already offer ratepayers the opportunity to see the name and number of their callers before they answer the phone. Businesses can match this information by computer with customers' files and greet callers knowing their buying history. The future has become the present. The RHCs seek to become massive electronic ganglia (as did Ma Bell before the breakup), expanding into cable TV, on-line weather and financial services, long-distance real estate shopping by video, transmission of movies by phone—services that enter the home through a phone line and are currently off-limits for RHCs. To make these businesses profitable, RHCs assert, judicial restraints arising from the original divestiture must be removed. But new businesses like these would simply provide the RHCs with new opportunities to shift costs—and risks—to ratepayers.

I LIVE IN YONVILLE

By Anthony Giardina

This is going to be a story about marriage. I don't know any others. It's twelve years for me this October, and in that time I can't think of much else that's happened. In the old nineteenth-century tales, the events of the world somehow managed to creep into the domestic cottage; bankers came chasing Balzac's bridegrooms, shouting and pulling out their hair at the fall of the Paris bank rates. But the world hasn't affected us much. We bought a house ten years ago, when the rates were 18 percent. Still, houses were a lot cheaper then. When the rates went down, we refinanced.

I am a reader, so I can tell you that Flaubert knew best when he began the story of Emma Bovary with Charles's school days. Once you know what an idiot Charles was as a boy, you understand much better how she is able to fool him, and why he puts up with her even when he ought to know better. I'm not going to tell you about infidelity here, because as far as I know there isn't any to tell about. But our world is small and provincial like the Bovarys', and if there were secrets here I would probably be the last to know.

As I write this, I am alone. It is that hour of the morning I have to myself. My wife leaves the house at 8:15. She is a medical technician at a hospital twenty miles north of here. My daughter is supposed to leave the house at the same time, but she is a dawdler. She takes her time tying her shoes. I like to have a good bowel movement after the both of them leave; it is the only time I am really fully relaxed. Then I sit at the kitchen table and drink a last cup of coffee and smoke a couple of cigarettes. Two's my limit, usually. I am not due at the office until 9:30.

Anthony Giardina is the author of the novels Men With Debts *and* A Boy's Pretensions. *He is currently at work on a new novel.*

I mentioned Flaubert before, and that was no idle name-dropping. I barely finished college, but I have kept up. Other men my age, if they read at all, read books by people like Ken Follett and Tom Clancy, while I have been known to come home from the library with a thick copy of *Middlemarch* under my arm. In towns like ours, we use the library. We feel civic-minded and virtuous doing so. It's also a way of saving money, though few besides me will admit it.

As for Flaubert, I am always impressed by the way he has of rooting his stories in the physical space his characters inhabit. Once I was at a party where I didn't know too many people, and some guy came up to me and asked me where I lived. I answered, "I live in Yonville." It was a way of testing how smart he was and also of telling the truth. He didn't get it, but I was proud of myself nonetheless. You can learn a lot about people from just a couple of details like that. I like to know the car a man drives, and how far he has to commute to work. People become dreamy in cars if they have to drive a long way. We put up a great fight against dreaminess by means of car stereos, but I find it's nearly always a losing battle. If I'm talking to someone who has to drive a long way to and from work, I tend to be kinder toward him. I think of this guy surrounded by mountains and fields and the long roads, and I know how you can't help feeling about your life on those long drives. Something creeps into the car with you; it's like that seat beside you doesn't really want to remain empty.

I drive twelve miles to work and twelve back. In the morning there's classical music and in the late afternoon a posh news show in which reporters from the BBC are forever heard shouting over gunfire in places like Baghdad and the West Bank. Last week there was an uprising in Azerbaijan and, sure

enough, the BBC was there, shouting. Personally, I couldn't care less what is going on in Azerbaijan, and I don't know anyone who really does. But there seems to be some agreement that at five o'clock, as we all drive home in our cars, we're going to listen to these reports with the attention we reserve for things that matter to us.

The fact is, our world has gotten smaller and smaller, and we've stopped complaining. What's to complain about? I am involved in the local PTO. My wife sends packages of clothes to poor Indian children somewhere in the Southwest. We vote. We cast our nets in the shallows. I write grant proposals for an expensive women's college. Our friends are doctors, tradesmen, local professionals. We are proud of our little world. Though no one would come out and say this outright, we consider it a model for the way all towns should be. We vote Democratic and don't object too strenuously to a rise in taxes. We think of our children as enlightened.

I know some people who are unmarried, but not many. That fact—along with all the preceding information—might make it sound like my life is totally homogenized, but I don't consider it so. I find great variety in the country of marriage. Always, you have to interpret the world through the subtlest of clues. We are forced to become detectives of each other, a far more interesting proposal, to my mind, than the naked emotionalism of the unattached. Divorce drops like sudden death among us. All the clues were there, but none of us picked up on them, so we have something to discuss for weeks. Who needs to listen to the news when we have the spectacle of Roberta Hawkins, who used to stay home baking tomato cakes for her husband, hitting the bars and bringing around a new boyfriend every week? The BBC would never think of coming here, and that is why we smile—I smile—when we hear the announcer's voice. It's as though he's stuck in an old version of the world. Or perhaps—who knows?—I am.

It's hard to remember exactly, but it seems five or six years ago I stopped thinking beyond my immediate circle. Before then, I suppose I was ambitious. I got this job, at least, which pays me well, though I don't see any real chance that I'll rise. Some other person might want to tell you this story from the inside out, but not me. I look around myself and there I see my story. When I'm alone for even a night away from here, I panic. This house and the car and the job, and, of course, the marriage, are what I've become. I'm not complaining.

Maybe you're a curious person and you want to know what I look like. Let's just say I'm one of those people you see on the beach in summer—we go to Wellfleet, ourselves—and don't wonder too much about. I'm small and slightly built, and my hair won't grow. It's always short. When it does grow, it grows unevenly no matter how it's cut, so I don't fight it, I just keep it



short. I've been told I'm not bad-looking, but I don't have what I suppose you'd call a sexual presence. I'm one of those men who might as well be women.

We recognize one another, I think, and make our friendships accordingly. There are certain men I just don't know what to say to. They seem to be savages to me, different entirely. I don't know what they want. You know the sort of men I'm talking about. Maybe you're one of them. If so, write the story of your life please, because I'd like to know it. When I pick up a contemporary novel that promises to lay bare what the cover describes as "the macho heart," I am generally disappointed. I am convinced there are more differences between us than the novelists allow. These "macho heart" novels are most likely written by men like me, men who are only guessing.

My friends are all as soft as marshmallows. We joke about one another's bellies, but no one really cares. None of us plays competitive sports, though we swim and run. We are the

Photograph by Barry Marcus

ones who failed at high school athletics. We are the ones the girls never liked. We consider ourselves lucky—blessed, even—because we found a girl to like us. We're not the ones you're going to catch sleeping with other women. Sometimes when we're alone in bars (it's rare) we marvel at the fact that all around us men are cheating on their wives. We stare at one another and laugh and ask: Who? It's the same game the virgins used to play in high school. There's a raw world and there's a tame one, and I believe you make the choice early as to which you're going to live in.

I'm on my third cigarette now. I know I shouldn't smoke, but I do. Everyone needs a vice. I don't even masturbate anymore. I think cigarettes prolong time, so I smoke them and look out the window and consider things. Then I get in the car, where the classical-music station is already deeply into Dvořák or Schumann. I cross the mountains some mornings in a state approaching what I remember it felt like to meditate. If you've been here, you know what the light is like. I'm proud to drive a good car, a Volkswagen Scirocco. I bought it new, three years ago.

At work, I joke with the girls. There are two of them. I'm the only man. Sheri does clerical work. Elaine works with me. She's from New York, married and divorced, looking. We eat lunch together. She discusses datelessness and I sympathize. She tells me I'm easy to talk to.

There are moments of the day that are difficult, of course. What day doesn't contain its emptinesses? For me, these moments usually arrive in the afternoon, after lunch, when the light begins to change. The fact is, I don't like the afternoon light here. It has the quality of seeming damp and harsh at once. It's a light like the emptying out of drawers. I am one of those men for whom the most sensual exercise of the day is the imagination of dinner. But at around 3:00 P.M. a dismal kind of fear starts up in me. I lose the thread of things. Usually I get a cup of coffee. It's the moment when I know that if I make a call, the person I am calling will not be there.

When our daughter was little, my fear always used to center around her. The day had a built-in drama, since it was never a given that the two of them, mother and child, would make it through the day unscathed. We had only one car then; they would drive me to work in the morning. At my desk, I would practically count the minutes until I could call them, in order to assure myself that they'd negotiated the passage safely. This was especially intense in winter, when there was ice on the roads.

Those days are over. I have ceased worrying for their safety. Something else troubles me now. It makes its appearance always in the form of an ambush. Sometimes it disappears quickly; still, it leaves me unsettled for the day.

Charles Bovary, had he been as bright as I am, would have recognized this feeling, since it was all around him. All he had to do was look up from his medical books. Perhaps he was wise not to. It is nothing so small as adultery, which seems to me now a forgivable thing. He was one with the life of Yonville. He saw nothing he couldn't excuse. But I see, at those moments of the day when the unwelcome light slants through the windows of the Grant Proposal Office, that few of us get away with this life we pretend to be living. Once maybe, but not anymore. On the green lawn of the Unitarian church each week a new inspirational slogan goes up on the announcement board. The quotes are secular, from writers and scientists and thinkers. This week it's "Blessed are the dreamers, for some of their dreams will come true." I forget the author. On Sundays we all smile and nod at one another, as if these are the things we truly believe, these are the truths that will see us through.

My problem, of course, is that I don't believe them. It takes a certain kind of light to force me to acknowledge this. On the drive home, I pass the Unitarian church and wonder for a moment what it would be like to deface the announcement board, or replace it with something like: "We've all been lucky so far, that's all."

At night, the three of us gather around the table and eat what is usually a good dinner. My wife works hard all day, but she manages to find the energy to cook us something original every night. Stir-fried pork and cauliflower, that sort of thing. White pizza with ricotta cheese. She's a beautiful woman, and our daughter is inheriting the shape of her face, her chin and eyes. We've talked about having another child. To tell you the truth, neither of us could probably say why we haven't done it. Sometimes I think it's necessary to see a thing before you can make it happen—we talk about this a lot in the fund-raising business—and I guess we just don't see ourselves as the sort of big jovial family so many people pretend to want. We think we're fine as three. We like our silences, our times alone. We worry about loneliness—our daughter's in particular—but when things are weighed in the balance, we end up doing nothing to change our lot. I suppose I harbor some jealousy against people with large families, but I

don't want to be them.

After our daughter goes to sleep, my wife and I have the nights to ourselves. She watches television, and I read. I feel guilty about her having to spend her days with blood and shit and urine; part of me feels I've been deficient in romance, or that I haven't supported her in any of her more ambitious endeavors. She once wanted to be a dancer. The more I talk to people, the more I realize everyone's wife once wanted to be a dancer. Now all these good women are nurses and teachers and therapists, and no one complains. We talk about our romantic youths, but mine was never romantic, and the fear I have is that I've taken some part of my terror of the world and planted it in her. So I write grant proposals all day, and she studies people's evacuations for signs of disease. We have our responsible lives, and at night we stay quietly at home, two good citizens in our little town.

It's only after my wife goes to bed that I start drinking. The day has its fault lines and this is one of them. I can't go to sleep early, but those hours alone in a house with two sleeping women are hard for me. It's like the fear that started up with the afternoon change in light returning in force. Nothing else can assuage it, not TV, not the book I happen to be reading. I drink a little scotch, a little ice, and I wait for sleep.

I remember the night—this was before I started drinking—when I read Turgenev's "First Love." I don't know if you've read it, but there's a passage at the end to break your heart. The young hero grows up and discovers that the beautiful Zinaida, his first love, the girl he jumped from the top of the greenhouse for, has died. But it is not her death he mourns at the end. Instead, he remembers the death of an old servant who had nothing to live for, but who, in dying, grasps at the remains of life as if her miserable existence had suddenly appeared to her as the most precious, extraordinary thing. The night I read that I started crying. I went into my daughter's room and looked at her face and cried some more. Then I went and sat and watched my wife sleeping, and it was all too much. I thought that night that I was at the very center of my life, as if I'd slid down a long sloping wall that had landed me in this moment and I was facing that wall's opposite, one that instead of sliding down I would have to climb. For all I know, that's when it began. I vowed that night to be good. It was one of those moments.

But I've found that such vows don't amount to much. There's a kind of knowledge that undoes you. Partly, it's knowing that fate has done its share of the work, has landed you where it's landed you, but that after a certain point it's not fate anymore but the particular direction one places one's feet that makes all the difference in the world. For a while you're sliding but then you're walking, and it figures's a way to walk and not watch yourself at the same time I don't know it. The feeling of that night, anyway, has numbed over. It's what happens, I guess. My vow was that I would stay and watch them both die, if I had to. But since then I've become too aware, in these moments of solitude, that other choices are available to me. Sometimes, driving home from work in a light that threatens to suffocate, I become aware of the fact that I could continue driving, just go somewhere else and begin all over again. I imagine making a collect call home from a phone in Ohio or Indiana. What's frightening is the way this imagined moment has a certain ghostly ring to it, like it's already happened.

That would be the clean break, of course. Instead, I'm fooling no one. I smoke these cigarettes, I drink this scotch. I do these things in moderation, but is anyone these days still fooled by moderation? I am a timid soul, and I do nothing to excess. I couldn't smoke a pack of cigarettes a day if I tried. I'd puke. And I'd puke if I drank more than three glasses of scotch a night. I wouldn't know how to explain any of this to my wife. She counts on me for the sort of steady, sober behavior that gives our life together stability. She doesn't know I smoke, and the scotch glass, if I neglect to wash it at night before I go to bed, she makes excuses for. Bourgeois males are supposed to drink at night. That's how the thinking goes.

After a point there's really not much sense to locking the door at night. Whatever terrors are out there seem nothing. My brother-in-law tells me about a friend of his, a good husband, an accountant, who feels compelled some nights to get into his Le Mans and drive from Westchester into Harlem. He picks up whores. He throws caution to the wind. A while ago I heard about a guy from around here whose wife was eight and a half months pregnant. Out of the blue, he took a trip to the Himalayas to climb the highest, slipperiest mountain there. In spite of my timid soul, I feel I understand these actions, as I pour my third scotch of the night or light up my fourth cigarette. There is always the hope, the off chance, that life will prove too much for us and we'll get out of this thing with some grace. It is the nature of terror that it not have a distinct visage, and that it not announce itself in daylight hours on the face of its prey, and so

will wonder, as you pass me, or other men like me, in the autumn, and catch a glimpse of us raking our lawns, our sons and daughters at play around us, how such a desirable life can contain such an appetite for its own destruction. But I assure you it's there, for those few of us who are like Emma, who simply cannot sit comfortably in these lives anymore without conjuring a beast staring squarely at us, measuring us and holding out almost tentatively, if beasts can be said to be tentative, the vial of M. Homais's arsenic.

You will, of course, dismiss this, say I'm being melodramatic, and to a degree you will be right. The feeling comes and goes, and there's no predicting its approach or its duration. For the most part, I am a happy man.

It's clear by now I'm going to be late this morning. Not that it matters. There are no appointments on my calendar until Thursday. Until then, I'm just filling time.

I crush my fourth cigarette, but something won't let me head for the door, not yet. This is a good kitchen. We worked hard putting it together, and the method of food preparation here is serious. I like nothing better than to watch my wife cook. On Saturday nights, when we put our daughter to bed early, I pour myself a glass of wine and watch her do something fancy, an orange sauce or chicken mole. At such moments I feel as far from the terror as I ever do. The warmth in the room is tangible, and I can say whatever I want to say. Something will uphold us, suspend us in its net. I haven't told you much about my wife, but I don't want you to get the impression that there isn't a lot to tell. She is stubborn, she is mostly her own woman, and she loves me. There is the sort of intimacy between us that is the reason everyone stays married, and there is the nakedness and shame that makes everyone want to bolt. To tell the story of a marriage, I think you only need to tell one side. In learning about me, you can conjure my opposite, and I'd venture to guess you won't be far off. I never am, at least, when I meet a spouse after getting to know her groom a little bit. You get to know their terrors and their desires, and after a while you come to understand there's only one sort of person who could hold those particular demons at bay. So if you need to imagine my wife, think of that woman you see on the beach sometimes, more beautiful than her husband deserves. To yourself, you think: They married young.

Still, they stay married, so something must be there. Whatever it is, it makes its appearance over our good expensive counter on those Saturday nights, and the reason I can't quite leave this kitchen now is the chance that some part of it might still be in the air, like an old scent the oven fan can't get rid of. We cut a hole out of the air for ourselves. It's no more than that, really, and the reason it doesn't survive is: What is there in the world to support bubbles? That's all that marriages are, really: bubbles. But while they float in the air, they have an enormous attractiveness. If I put this cigarette out and head for the door, it's only because I want to get to the next Saturday night.

I'm on my fifth cigarette now, but I can feel the danger's past. I'm going to go and see Sheri and Elaine and think about how we can shake the Mellon Foundation for a few extra thou. I can feel the energy for this, though I have no idea where it's coming from, just as, later, I will have no idea where it went. At the end of the day, I'll listen to the fighting in provinces of the Soviet Union, the BBC, and I'll try to pay attention, try to place my moments of panic beside my moments of calm, to convince myself that life contains a balance. There will be moments—I can be assured of this—when I'll want to send up a wild howl. But I'll stifle that urge. Light always changes, I'll remind myself. It only stays hard for a while.

It seems to me that life requires us, as time goes on, to become masters of convincing ourselves of the simplest things. To prefer life to death, for one. I have this twelve-mile ride ahead of me this morning. I have Dvořák for consolation, and there are these dips at the side of the road it would be so easy to go over. On Saturday nights, my wife cooks wonderful chicken things. I'll try to remember that.

There. I've put it out. I suppose that means something. Barely smoked. Live or die. They say maturity is not caring so much. I wouldn't know. I have a photograph of my wife I keep in the glove compartment of the car. It helps, I find sometimes, to take it out and look at it out of the corner of my eye as I drive. It's a simple picture, really, taken outside a beach house we rented once. It was a cloudy Sunday. Perhaps you know the way the clouds look on a late summer afternoon on the Cape. She had developed a sty that day, and was wearing sunglasses. In the photograph, she sits on a weathered wooden chair, staring directly into the camera. Her eyes are hidden, but the expression is unmistakable. It's nothing you can put into words. She is a woman in a chair on a late summer afternoon, that's all. Still, I can't look at it without thinking she is asking me to come closer. And in my imagination—at least on days like these, when one thing seems better than another—I do. ■

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SYNDROMES

Making one's way, again, through Vietnam

By Larry Heinemann

As the plane descended into Hanoi through scattered cloud cover, I was watching for wide swaths of craters left from the B-52 bombings. After twenty-two years I was returning to Vietnam, invited along with Vietnam-veteran authors and poets Philip Caputo, Yusef Komunyakaa, W. D. Ehrhart, Larry Rottmann, and Bruce Weigl, and former Vietnam correspondent George Wilson, to spend three weeks traveling the country and meeting Vietnamese writers. The William Joiner Foundation of Boston arranged for the trip, and it was the foundation's David Hunt who had said we should look for the craters—he remembered so many from his previous trips. The closer we got to the ground, the more we saw, but we saw too where the Vietnamese had been filling them in, no doubt a shovelful at a time, the way they dug the tunnels of Cu Chi and built the Ho Chi Minh Trail.



We were driven to the People's Committee guesthouse, across West Lake from the city, in an old French-built compound of vacation villas (with boat slips and lily ponds) where the Vietnamese Politburo meets every once in a while and the Vietnamese put up many foreign tourists—mostly Soviets and Eastern Europeans. The grounds were covered with thick, unkempt grass, narrow brick driveways and footpaths, and many trees—the whole compound encircled by a waist-high, falling-down barbed-wire fence hung on old-fashioned concrete posts, with a single-bar main gate that you could blow through with a decent sneeze at the end of a long and narrow lane lined with shade trees. Around the grounds inside the fence were French-built guard-duty shacks, manned day and night by *bui doi*—kids really—with scant, distant, vague memories of the war, if any. They carried pistol belts and wore plastic sandals (not the tire-rubber Ho Chi Minh sandals that were NVA issue during the war) and billed garrison caps. Besides the waitresses in the compound's dining hall, these were the first Vietnamese I'd talked to since 1968—one-word sentences helped along with plenty of body language.

The surrounding countryside was laced with villages and hamlets—most of the small, two-room houses constructed of substantial brick and stucco—rice paddies, and enormous lily ponds that covered forty acres and more at a crack, everything as vividly and richly green as green can be. There were two or three villages within easy walking distance of the compound, flower gardens—roses and gladiolus and chrysanthemums and such—and truck gardens fenced with strips of crosshatched bamboo that doubled as pea fences.

Everyone in the villages got up early and got to work while it was cool. In the morning we'd see men in o.d. pith helmets wading neck deep, working a seine or traps, I suppose; so we knew the catch was fresh that afternoon and evening at meals—crab and shrimp and fish. Some villagers would gather at the cart path that extended into the lily ponds, and a couple guys would slip into small, shallow-draft reed boats with tarred bottoms and pole around the ponds picking lily blossoms—huge purple flowers on man-high stalks. These they would gather into armful bundles in the bottom of the

Larry Heinemann is the author of Close Quarters *and of* Paco's Story, *which won the 1987 National Book Award for fiction.*

Photograph by Lori Grinker / Contact Press Images

boats; and the women would wrap a couple of these bundles with large fronds, tie the bundles on the backs of their bikes, and pedal into Hanoi to sell them at the market.

Hanoi, which we got to see piecemeal on daily sorties, was scruffy but not dirty—no garbage in the streets or anything like that (you get the impression that nothing is wasted but recycled to death); some buildings were painted and some were not. Everything was constructed of brick and stucco and looked substantial, if discolored and mildewed in the humid, withering heat of June. There were kids everywhere. There are 67 million people in Vietnam, half of whom are under the age of twenty, born since 1971.

We met Vietnamese writers for the first time at a two-day conference sponsored by the Hanoi Writers Union and held at the compound. Most of the Vietnamese (from all over the country) read prepared statements. The Americans were saved the bother of written statements; I wouldn't have known what to say in print anyway. But we managed to talk for hours on end, trying to explain the roots of our writing, the spirit of the American troops, our relationship with our government. Some of us were frankly apologetic about the conduct of the war; others less so.

The Vietnamese seemed less interested in talking about the war; they wanted to talk about literature. Ngo Vinh Vien, a translator of American literature and professor at Hanoi University, told us that many American writers had been translated into Vietnamese, including Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, Jack London, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Richard Wright. Nguyen Lien, a lecturer at Hanoi University—the room was filled with academics, journalists, and other interested lookers-on sitting at the second-rank tables—told me that his job during the American War (as the Vietnamese called it) was to study American literature in Beijing and Moscow and then give in-country lectures on Whitman, Faulkner, and Hemingway to troops moving south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. He said that many Vietnamese humped translated copies of American literature south from Hanoi. (Another Vietnamese writer told me she had carried translations of Hemingway and Jack London novels in her rucksack.)

Professor Lien asked me what Vietnamese literature I had read during the war. I was embarrassed to admit that I hadn't read literature of *any* kind; that U.S. troops were not given classes in literature that I knew of—certainly not in Whitman, Faulkner, or Hemingway, much less any Vietnamese authors. The Red Cross did provide American troops with boxes of cast-off pulp paperbacks, but in the year I was in Vietnam, and for all the boxes of books I rummaged through, I found exactly one book—*Hawaii*, by James Michener—that held any interest, and then only the first couple chapters. I told the good professor that the American government didn't think the troops needed to know anything about Vietnamese history or culture, their tradition of music, theater, literature, language, or customs; I said that the troops were kept profoundly ignorant about everything Vietnamese, and were discouraged from going near anything as subversive as their food or accepting their hospitality—though it was fine with the generals if we fucked their women and fucked over everyone else.

I don't suppose the American troops sent to Saudi Arabia got any more information about Arabs than we got about the Vietnamese, or so I find myself thinking as I write. Kept seriously segregated from ordinary workaday Saudi street life, fighting a mercifully short ground war in Kuwait—a different kind of war, and thank God for that—those involved in Operation Desert Storm were not in anything like Vietnam. Which is why I cannot understand the President declaring the "Vietnam Syndrome" a thing of the past. What does he mean? That we finally fought a war and got our way—a clean kill and a clear conscience? For me the Vietnam War has been a nail in my head, a corpse in my house; a syndrome, maybe, but not one lifted by the Gulf War.

If Vietnam continues to haunt so many of the American veterans of that war, it does not seem to be the same for the Vietnamese, or so I began to glimpse at the Hanoi conference. The older men, especially, let you know in no uncertain language that they resented the French as colonialists. But Americans—they *like* us, despite all the bombing, the Agent Orange spraying, the utter rancorous hatred we'd had for them. I asked Nguyen Thieu, our interpreter (probably the best young poet in the country), and Le Luu, the author of five novels (a writer regarded as the Hemingway of Vietnam), about it more than once and in as many ways as I could, but they couldn't articulate it. Neither can I, nor can most other veterans who have gone back and had precisely the same take.

One morning I went with the writers to meet Vo Nguyen Giap, the military commander who'd set the strategy first against the French, then against the Americans and the South Vietnamese. We arrived at the foreign ministry in high spirits but nervous. Giap *was*, after all, one of the twentieth century's great military minds; I *was*, after all, and everything else being equal, just a grunt.

The ministry, like many another substantial building in town, was French-built, surrounded by an iron fence, with a glass and cast-iron portico over the front—the former French colonial governor-general's residence. The ministry flunkies ushered us into the reception hall to the side. Two long rows of uncomfortable easy chairs faced each other, and each chair had a coffee table in front of it. At the head of the room were two equally uncomfortable chairs (with coffee tables) for General Giap, seventy-eight and now retired, and Kevin Bowen, former army N.C.O. and now co-director of the Joiner Foundation (and head of our delegation). On each coffee table was a bouquet of red and white carnations, a water glass, and a large plate of fruit—litchis and small bananas.

Giap entered, wearing an open-

Secretary Baker's Peace Mission

...and the President putting pressure in the right places?

...he Gulf War, which many now believe we ended too early, Saddam Hussein and ... ted the most horrible genocidal slaughter on the defenseless Kurds. But ... d Secretary Baker initially paid only cursory attention to this disaster, even ... artly of our own doing. They are mostly fixated on the so-called "Israel-...inian conflict" and they are bringing renewed pressure on Israel to yield "land for peace".

What are the facts?

■ The Secretary may be handicapped by the fact that, until his recent visits, he had no real knowledge, no "feel" for the country and its unique problems. That is the ... regrettable since Israel is certainly the closest (and perhaps only reliable) ally the United States has in the entire region. If he had deeper knowledge, he would realize that in the absence of any reliable and enduring peace with the Arab countries, Israel could not give up any of its strategic heartland; the so-called "West Bank". From the heights of the Judean hills, which he would have Israel yield to the Arabs, one can literally overlook Zion Square in Jerusalem, Ben Gurion Airport, and most of Israel's population centers, industrial plant, and military installations. One shivers at the thought of what would have happened to Israel if Saddam Hussein, instead of having launched his relatively innocuous Scud missiles from 450 miles away, could have positioned his armor, his planes and his missiles in the "West Bank" or on those Judean mountain ridges.

■ There are those who claim that, in these days of airplanes and missiles, territorial depth is of no military significance and that Israel should therefore not hesitate to relinquish the "West Bank" and Gaza in order to attain peace. But that is fallacious reasoning. Israel, according to the assessment of every knowledgeable military person, would be naked and indefensible if it were to yield those territories. If Israel did not control those territories it would, in case of surprise attack, be cut in half at its narrow waist before it had time to mobilize. Why the President and Secretary Baker continue to press this suicidal course on its most reliable ally in the area is a mystery. Is it because they don't really understand the murderous intentions of the Arabs toward Israel? The goal of the Arabs is not the establishment of a "Palestinian State" on the "West Bank". No, the real goal of the Arabs, embedded in the Charter of the PLO and never repudiated, is the total annihilation of the state of Israel. The presence of the "infidel Jews" in their midst is an unacceptable affront to the Arabs. The Palestinian state is a sideshow. Its purpose is to serve as a launching pad for the last "jihad" — finally to chase the Jews into the sea "where they belong".

■ And there are those who say that Israel doesn't really need any strategic depth. All that is needed would be guarantees by the United Nations and a mutual security treaty, which the United States would probably grant if Israel were to yield to pressure and would give up the "West Bank". The United States is undoubtedly the best friend and the greatest benefactor that Israel has. But Israel simply can't afford to entrust its security to a third party. Even with the best of intentions, the United States is far away. It took our country several months, and under ideal conditions, to build up a force to fight and defeat Saddam Hussein. If Israel were attacked — not just by Iraq, but by probably five or six other Arab countries, no help could possibly arrive in time if the enemy were poised, not beyond the Jordan, but on the outskirts of Jerusalem and within a few miles of Tel Aviv.

Our country has saved both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia from total destruction and from becoming provinces of Iraq . It is therefore disappointing that the President and the Secretary of State decided to lean, not on the Arabs but on Israel in order to bring about peace in the Middle East. One could have hoped for some gratitude at least from those two countries. Secretary Baker, as a first step in his peace mission, could have asked the Arabs to terminate their state of belligerency against Israel, to end their commercial boycott against Israel that has been in effect for over 40 years (long before Israel came into the administration of the disputed territories), and to renounce the slanderous equation that "Zionism is racism". But there is no leaning on the Arabs who, just barely having escaped their annihilation, are now as insolent and as arrogant as before. By leaning on Israel and by the constant repetition of the shopworn mantra of "land for peace", the President and the Secretary of State are endangering the only democracy in that wide area of the world and are instead giving comfort to the tyrannical Arab regimes, who are no friends of ours. The pressure is being put in the wrong place and it is applied in the wrong direction.

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collar uniform shirt and stiff epaulets with his rank stitched in gold. We started talking shop right off. Giap was polite and somewhat cagey when asked to compare his army with the American army, though he did say that "at first the Americans were realistic, but then they became too proud." When asked about the grand rumor that black soldiers had reportedly been seen fighting with the North Vietnamese, he readily replied yes—not American deserters but Algerians from the French Foreign Legion who stayed behind when the French quit Vietnam in 1954. Someone asked him about the technological weapons arrayed against him, and he replied something to the effect that "to the Vietnamese, material strength is not strength; the people are the strength," which is probably the truest thing he did say.

After we had talked for some time, the general invited us to eat something, virtually insisting, waving his hand to all of us and indicating the fruit. Taking his own advice, he picked up a banana (they were short and thick), peeled it, and, smiling at his own gregariousness, ate it delicately while we continued to talk. After we had been chatting for some time I remarked that his face seemed very peaceful, that his whole manner was peaceful, and he replied, "My whole strategy was peace; that is why my face is peaceful." Which is another way of saying, "We won the war. Why shouldn't I feel good about that!"

Meeting with Giap, speaking to other Vietnamese statesmen and generals, and to virtually everyone we came in contact with, reminded me that in the United States there is nowadays circulating the oddly revised conclusion that the U.S. could have won that war. Where did this bizarre notion come from? Certainly not from any 11-Bravo grunt I know. To say we could have won the war is to say that we didn't fill our hearts with enough hate; didn't napalm or strafe or frag them hard enough; didn't Zippo enough hooches. The war was unwinnable. Such was the extraordinary ambi-

tion of the Vietnamese to rid their country of foreigners that we would have had to kill them all and burn their country to the ground.

From Hanoi we flew to Da Nang, and from there we drove north on Highway 1 to Hue—the old imperial city and traditionally the country's intellectual center. Vietnam is narrowest here. The scenery is spectacular. The Gulf of Tonkin sparkled blue beneath us, and the light and air were astonishingly clear. When we got to the crest of the road, we paused. We were at the Hai Vanh Pass, the Cumberland Gap and Continental Divide of Vietnam, a place of strategic military importance going back God knows how many thousands of years. A body can easily imagine standing guard duty at such a place at night; a body can well imagine hard and long fighting right at this spot.

There was a restaurant and Buddhist shrine on one side of the road, and up the slope on the other side were several American- and French-built bunkers. And there we also saw something we saw nowhere else—about half a truckload of GI scrap, including perhaps a dozen old, rusty 105-mm howitzer rounds, a shipping canister from a 155-mm howitzer round (which looks vaguely like a piece of 10" terra-cotta sewer pipe), and a large, squarish metal box used for transporting and storing howitzer fuses. Two days later, when we drove back south, they were gone, the scrap recycled, the howitzer rounds no doubt painstakingly disarmed and dismantled. If the Vietnamese are finding live ammo—rusted or not—along a road as well traveled as Highway 1 (the main drag that unites the whole country), what must still be in store for them in the countryside?

As we came down the road, we finally rolled onto flatland and hours later—having passed white beaches and rice paddies and truck gardens aplenty—drove into Hue. There we stayed at the Huong Giang Hotel, just across the river from the market and kitty-corner from the bridge and the old Citadel—the site of some of the fiercest fighting of the 1968 Tet offensive. A great many junks were moored in the river between the hotel and the market—a large warehouse-looking place. The hotel was mostly empty, and if there was no hot water for a shower, there was no cold water either—there was water, to be sure, but it was neither hot nor cold.

The next day we drove up to Quang Tri, Highway 9, and the DMZ, where now is the Truong Son military cemetery—the countryside all sand and pines, a panorama of scrub. I had taken my medals and ribbons to Vietnam with the idea of leaving them, and the cemetery seemed the best place to begin. I didn't have that many medals anyway. Only what is called the Vietnam row—the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, the Vietnam Service Ribbon, and the National Defense Ribbon—along with the Army Commendation Medal (for helping to put out an ammo-dump fire I would have put out for free), the Good Conduct Medal (utter gratuitous lifer chickenshit), and the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB), a blue, metallic rectangle with the silhouette of a Kentucky long rifle bordered with a wreath. It is the one and only military award that actually means anything to me, because it represents all the grueling, ball-busting, back-breaking grunt work I had to put up with. I don't have a Purple Heart (by the grace of God's luck and nothing else) or a medal for "bravery"; I wasn't that eager a soldier and never did a brave thing in front of anyone who survived to testify.

The Truong Son cemetery is laid out on a number of low hills, and tens of thousands of men and women who died on the Ho Chi Minh Trail are buried there, by province. The cremated remains are interred in small concrete graves with rough, plain, concrete headstones—though, like all military cemeteries (the ones on Iwo Jima and at Normandy come to mind), you get the notion that there is a mass grave nearby and

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ding I came to the grave of a man named Phuong. I got down on my haunches with Le Luu, took out the CIB, and explained to him what the medal was and what it meant. Then I laid it on Phuong's small concrete grave. I imagined that Phuong worked harder for the CIB than I did (*every* Vietnamese worked harder than I did) and, simply put, deserved it more. And when I stood up, suddenly I was profoundly sad that this man was dead—killed trying to free his country, but dead just the same—sorry that he and I never got a chance to meet.

The first time I went to Vietnam was as a draftee, and I submitted to conscription with what can only be described as soul-deadening dread. I was twenty-three years old, and did not want to be there. We were treated like meat and were expected to behave like meat. I did not like it there and took *that* out on the Vietnamese. I never shot anyone who didn't deserve to be shot (of that I am sure; I've sat up many a long night to reason *that* out). I did my tour as best I could, never mind that the war overwhelmed me. We rode roughshod over the countryside, delighting in the destruction we caused. I came home absolutely determined to forget that place and put the war behind me, never mind that *that* was not possible and did not happen.

On the drive back to Hue we passed through a newly resettled village of Montagnards, a state-owned rubber plantation (still seedlings and fifteen or twenty years away from producing latex). I felt as if a stone had been lifted from my heart.

Some days later we traveled to Tay Ninh City, near where I had been stationed with the 25th Divi- North of Ho Chi Minh City—formerly Saigon—is Cu Chi, and north of that is Trang Bang and Go Dau Ha near the Cambodian border, and north of Go Dau Ha is Tay Ninh City and the Nui Ba Den, what we used to call the Black Virgin Mountain.

From Tay Ninh Province I took away memories of deserted, crummy dirt roads positively lumpy with land-mine craters, mud holes, and deep ruts; scant, pitiful villages, few working farms; and little traffic on foot, bicycles, motorcycles, or otherwise. I have a U.S. Army terrain map, made during the war, that represents the twenty square miles or so around Tay Ninh City; it shows thirty-two hamlets and villages destroyed or abandoned—more than half. All this has changed: Now there are vast panoramas of flooded rice fields, bustling villages, and constant traffic—people on foot, on bicycles, in jitneys (made over from jeeps and three-quarter-ton U.S. Army trucks).

As we drove I kept an eye out the right side of the van across the tops of the distant wood lines for a first glimpse of the mountain. The Nui Ba Den is barely a thousand meters high, but it has the same emotional impact as if Mount McKinley were set in the middle of Kansas—a *prominent* terrain feature. And then, tiny and smoky, there it was above the treetops—gray and squat; we had to be ten or fifteen miles from it yet. I shouted that there, *there* was the Black Virgin Mountain, and everyone looked; I felt, strangely, that I was coming home to something. All these years the Black Virgin Mountain has been a large image in my dreams and imagination, and I was eager to see it again, as if to verify and validate for my own heart's ease that the war, and my writing about the war (and my apparently inexhaustible bitterness), had not been a dream. Perhaps I am old enough now to want that assurance, which is corny and sentimental. But then why do men of my father's generation find a way to return to Italy and France, Iwo Jima and Okinawa; why did Eisenhower return to Normandy six years before his death?

The mountain was just a big pile of rock, and even on the clearest day during the driest weather the summit was wreathed by clouds. Most of all, I remember that no matter where we went that year you could look up and see it. It is, in my memory, mysterious and menacing. (A person is left to wonder if the troops in the Gulf came away with any feeling for a particular spot of landscape, aside from the panorama of sand and desolation.)

During the war there had been a Special Forces radio-communications station on top of the Nui Ba Den, and the engineers had a rock quarry at the bottom of the western slope; you could hear the rock crusher grinding away for many a mile. There were Cao Dai religious shrines here and there on the slopes of the mountain, and the Vietcong had tunneled well in; the mountain was laced with tunnels and resembled a fortified sponge. (When I asked the Tay Ninh writers who were our hosts how many people in and around the city had been VC, they told us *everyone*.)

During the time my battalion operated in that neck of the woods, my reconnaissance platoon would sit perimeter guard for a battery of 105-mm howitzers at Soui Da four clicks east, and at night we could see the lights of many small lamps snaking up the side of the mountain—VC, we knew. One day late in the summer of 1967, choppers airlifted hundreds of 105-mm howitzer rounds to us. It made a pile man-high and thirty or forty feet long. The next day Bravo Company assaulted the mountain, driving their APCs (armored personnel carriers; "tracks," we called them) as far up the slope as they could—which wasn't far—and the troopers went the rest of the way on foot, which also wasn't far. The artillery began its barrage in the morning and continued until they'd fired all the ammunition they had; at dusk there were 105-mm brass cartridges all over the place.

The Nui Ba Den has been turned into a park, complete with gatehouse, parking lot, and memorial shrine. We walked up the slope to

the shrine. Above us the cascade of boulders seemed frozen in place. It was, in fact, as close to the mountain as I'd ever been. We offered handfuls of joss sticks to the souls of the dead. I left the rest of my medals and ribbons.

On the way back to Ho Chi Minh City—Ho'ville, as some veterans call it—we stopped in downtown Trang Bang. East and north of town was another forward support base where my platoon had laagered more than once, sitting perimeter for a battery of 105-mm howitzers while the line companies worked the Hobo Woods. Every once in a while Recon would send a couple tracks to Trang Bang to escort trucks from the Cu Chi/Tay Ninh convoy, mostly deuce-and-a-half trucks of artillery rounds, beer, and food for the battery's mess tents. We would blow into the shaded and cozy fountain square at Trang Bang and park anywhere we fucking pleased, and sit around a sidewalk café with dust-crusted faces and dirty hair, naked to the waist except for our flak jackets, waiting for the Tay Ninh convoy with our rifles and shotguns and grenade launchers (with rounds of double-aught buckshot in the chambers) on the table among the liter bottles of "33" beer.

This time we pulled into town, parked, and wandered up and down the market street, me recognizing nothing. I discovered that the fountain square had been destroyed at the end of the war, in April 1975, when the North Vietnamese troops came off the tail end of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and pushed south through Tay Ninh and Trang Bang and Cu Chi toward Saigon. The fountain and the square had been replaced with the People's Committee compound—city hall. One of the Vietnamese traveling with us went for beers, and as we drank our Heinekens and strolled the market it began to rain. David Hunt and I popped into a one-table pool hall between a butcher's stall and a shop selling household items. Two guys were shooting cushion billiards, and the place was crowded with kids. The word quickly spread that Americans were in the marketplace, and

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filled with other lookers-on.

me to play. He laughed when I and selected a rolled it on the table to check its plumb. I chalked it, leaned over the table, and laid the cue across the back of my hand, fingers spread "Chicago style." Now, I haven't the faintest idea how to shoot cushion billiards—straight pool and eight ball are my games. All I had in mind was Larry Rottmann's rule of travel: "Stop and talk; make a friend." We traded licks and smiled; I teased the kids until the rain let up, thanked the man, and put back my cue. I wondered what they thought. I haven't the faintest idea if I won or lost or made a fool of myself.

The next day we drove back out of the city to visit Cu Chi, where the 25th Division was headquartered, and especially the notorious Cu Chi tunnels—the COSVN (VC) headquarters, a place I'd spent more or less my whole tour of Vietnam looking for. This, too, the Vietnamese have turned into a park, complete with a Huey chopper that, for effect, they had "crash-landed" in the high, second-growth jungle scrub, an organized tunnel tour conducted by bona fide park rangers, and gift-shop T-shirts. Taken with a grain of salt, a large dose of tongue-in-cheek grunt humor, the tunnels of Cu Chi have to be one of the great gags of the war, as well as one of the great puzzling myths. We knew the sons of bitches were there; we just couldn't find them—not with B-52 air strikes, not with huge bulldozers called Rome Plows, not with years of serious, motivated searching.

We were ushered into a thatch-roofed, open-air hut set up for lectures, and sat on homemade benches. At the front was a large painted map of the tunnels that looked like a route map for the U.S. interstates and a homemade gun rack with an AK-47, M-16, M-79 grenade launcher, and a B-40 rocket and launcher—what we called an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade launcher), an anti-tank weapon. The only weapon I was terrified of, besides land mines, an RPG could go through the 1¼ armor plate of an APC like spit through a screen.

The director of the park explained, among other things, that there were 200 kilometers of tunnels, dug by hand starting in 1959. He had a cross-section drawing that showed the complexity of the levels: bunkers and spider holes, booby traps and dead ends, barracks and mess halls, ammo dumps and hospitals, main drags and side alleys. We listened to the lecture while the park rangers lounged in low-slung hammocks strung between the trees some distance off, waiting to conduct us on the tour. You get the same blah, blah, blah if you visit Colonial Williamsburg or the Coal Mine at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago or (I suppose) the Grand Canyon River Trip for Seniors. While the director talked, I couldn't help but think of William Westmoreland telling a joint session of Congress in 1968 about his famous "light at the end of the tunnel," and Michael Herr's overhearing some 25th Division "tunnel rat" retort, "What does that asshole know about tunnels?"

Lecture over, we were led down a trail through the jungle to a place where a number of trails came together in a small clearing about the size of a city house lot. Our Ho'ville host, Quang Sang (author of eight novels and books of short stories), had been a tunnel rat for ten years and still had that lean and mean look about him—the sort of guy you'd like on your side in a bar fight. He was one Vietnamese I met who spoke of the B-52 air strikes with great bitterness. He could hardly suppress his glee when he asked us to "find" the tunnel entrance.

"You're standing within two meters of it," he told me. Everyone stood back. The ground was clear, though covered with a scatter of leaves, but for the life of me I couldn't see it. I'd never seen one plain and simple twenty-two years before. What made anybody think I was going to discover one now, even if Sang told me I was standing six feet from it? Finally impatient, he brushed aside some leaves and *there* was a small loop of ordinary household wire and a small square, as if someone had scratched in the dirt with a stick. He slipped his finger through the loop and pulled up the cover.

One of the rangers gave every other person a flashlight, then one at a time the group of ten of us shimmied feetfirst down the entrance, stooped over, and duck-walked half a dozen paces into a large meeting room with a bunkered roof made of timbers and dirt. There was a large table in the middle surrounded by benches. The ranger explained that this was a conference room. Then he signaled "follow me" and popped into another tunnel. We stooped again and duck-walked perhaps a hundred meters. The floor and walls were damp—clammy and sticky—the air rank, the heat stifling. I was quickly soaked through with sweat, claustrophobic, and ready to leave. Halfway to the end my legs and back ached terribly. I staggered on my haunches—thinking I would have made the world's worst tunnel rat (scooting along on my stomach, crawling on my elbows and hips, pushing myself along with the toes of my boots, pouring sweat, scared shitless); if I'd tried this with a flashlight and a .45 I *would* have come home in a bag.

When we came to the end I thanked the ranger, gave him back his flashlight, and washed my face and hands at the bamboo contraption set up for the visitors to "refresh" themselves. In the gift shop was a rack of T-shirts that proclaimed something to the effect that the wearer had seen/crawled/survived the tunnels of Cu Chi, but I saw no reason to buy one. Having humped it once was souvenir enough.

Several days later I visited my old base camp at Dau Tieng, where the Michelin rubber plantation had once been headquartered. As with all the other American bases we saw, everything had been dismantled to the dirt and carted away; the airstrip incorporated into the road; the area

where our platoon had pitched its tents transformed into a cashew orchard, the precise rows of trees head-high.

I'd never spent any time in Saigon. I saw the city from a school bus, its windows covered with chicken wire, which I rode from Tan Son Nhut Air Base to the reeple deeple in Long Binh before I moved out to the 25th Division at Cu Chi. So Ho'ville was a revelation to me. There was hustle. There was bustle. There was plenty of traffic—bicycles, cyclos, and Hondas of every size and description, curbside entrepreneurs selling everything from beer and fruit to bike-tire fill-ups to gas by the liter in glass jars. There were plenty of traffic lights and one-way streets, with signs along the boulevards prohibiting oxcart traffic; there were ad hoc street-corner cafés, with short-legged tables and backless stools or miniature wicker chairs, where men in loose shirts and long pants, sandals, and bad haircuts were putting their heads together cutting a deal, sharing a joke, exchanging news.

In Hanoi there were few locks and little paranoia. In Ho'ville locks were everywhere. If in Hanoi there was some nightlife, in Ho'ville there was nightlife all day. We were there during the World Cup soccer matches in Italy, and every evening people would wander into the open-air cafés to sit up half the night watching black-and-white TVs (there were few privately owned TVs). At midnight and into the morning the neighbors huddled and crowded around the local café TV, drinking beer and café au lait, while the kids played soccer in the street in the dim electric light.

One morning near the end of the trip we were taken to the Amerasian compound. The Amerasian Transit Center was set up in 1989, by agreement between the Vietnamese and U.S. governments, to facilitate the emigration to the States of the children born to American GIs and Vietnamese women, if GI paternity can be verified by physical appearance. Applicants come there from all over Vietnam to await "shipment" to the States. The average

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A	L	C	O	H	O	L	I	C	C	O	N	T	E	N
P	G	K	D	E	T	E	N	T	E	N	A	H	N	A
S	O	R	R	E	L	X	E	G	R	O	G	R	A	M
C	R	A	Y	F	I	S	H	L	I	M	E	A	D	E
A	I	R	E	D	A	L	E	O	S	E	A	M	O	S
R	L	E	Y	U	N	Y	R	V	I	R	G	I	N	A
A	L	L	E	M	A	N	D	E	G	R	E	T	A	K
B	A	N	D	B	O	X	D	Y	N	A	S	T	I	E

NOTES FOR "BURDEN OF PROOF"

ACROSS: 1. S(UP)-S; 7. DROL(reversal)-L; 13. O-VERV(e)-IE-W; 14. M(ine)-AU twice; 18. DE(TEN)TE, anagram; 19. SOR(R)E(anagram)-L; 22. SMAR(t), reversed; 24. C-RAYFISH (anagram); 25. L(I)ES; 27. AI-RED; 30. SEAM(an); 33. VI(R...)AL; 34. ALL-EMAN(reversal)-DE; 35. R(ET)AKE; 36. (p)OX; 37. SEN(...Y)D, reversed. DOWN: 1. SO-A-P; 2. PECK, two meanings; 3. P(unter)-RO(reversal); 4. R(a)I(n)O(u)T; 5. TEL(reversal)-EX; 6. SHERD, hidden; 7. DUCT, "ducked"; 8. R(ACE)-R; 9. EG-AN-AM, reversed; 10. RUT-H; 11. OMEN, hidden; 12. LUTES, "LOOTS"; 14. MONO(ME)R, anagram; 16. NAME, hidden; 17. G(O)RILLA-A; 18. D(YE)D; 19. S-C(A)RAB; 20. (cu)RARE; 21. LIAN (reversal)-A; 23. A-DONA-I(dolize); 25. (c)LOVE-Y; 26. SOLES, "souls"; 28. DU(M)B; 29. (wel)L-YN(reversal)-X; 30. SIG(reversal)-N; 31. A-GES, SE(ado)-G, reversed; 32. (equipment)T-TIM, reversed & Lit.

SOLUTION TO JUNE DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 102). S(TEPHEN) LONGSTREET: JAZZ FROM A TO Z. The Charleston began as a craze then became a ritual in the twenties. It first appeared in Harlem in the show *Liza*. It lasted longer than most dance crazes. Josephine Baker introduced it to Europe, and her long-legged frenzy made [illegible]

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 103, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by July 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the August issue. Winners of Double Acrostic No. 101 are April Kost, Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania; Mary Hille McCoy, Monterey, Virginia; and Marguerite Gomes, Newark, Delaware

[illegible] days, though [illegible] as long as six [illegible] While they remain at the [illegible] are given health check- [illegible] -es in English. In a good month, anywhere between 1,200 and [illegible] Amerasians (mothers and families included) are sent off to the U.S., and by the time the program ends in 1992, about 80,000 souls will have emigrated to the U.S.

It is a compound of several acres with a number of common buildings—dining hall, administration, classroom, and the like—roads and sidewalks unfinished, no grass or gardens or trees. The Amerasians and their families stay in a number of two-story, barrack-like row houses. As is typical of any Vietnamese house, each apartment has two rooms, front and back, with a good deal of out-of-doors living.

When we pulled up to the administration building, a crowd of children and young adults quickly gathered. It was obvious that they had been told of our visit, the compound spiffied up, and everyone urged to dress their best. The kids in the compound were friendly and engaging. Some out-and-out bald-faced gawked. Some of them as good as got right in our faces. And some boldly asked the one question that passes for GI-Amerasian gallows humor; the question that is the wry recognition of their place in Vietnamese society as "children of the dust" and their expectation of relief when they finally haul up on the shores of a place I suspect they regard as the "Land of the Big PX" (as do many peoples of the Third World); the question that is the single burning issue of their young lives, their paternity the subject of family myth sustained by their mothers; the question any American ex-GI can both welcome and dread at the same time: "Are you my daddy?" It's a simple fucking question, accompanied by a long moment and a long look (and a *look* of longing): Who knows? Maybe it's really him. No harm asking.

God knows how my expression changed. If they had said "father," that would have been one thing, but the word was "daddy"—much warmer, intimately affectionate. I had not expected the gag quite so soon, but be assured, a nifty little gag it is—the one undeniable connection between GIs and Amerasians. We are their fathers; life doesn't get any simpler than that.

I laughed with the kids who surrounded David Hunt and me, and shook my head, sharing the recognition of our common predicament—an unanswerable question, an unsolvable conundrum, an unravelable knot. They had been conceived in love, for such a thing is common in war, or braggadocious selfishness or pure lust or hateful resentment or through the anonymity of cash. They were none of them my children and they were all of them mine. I answered no and laughed and shook my head.

As we walked around, an undeniable uneasiness overcame me. Nervous guilt at being confronted by an unalterable responsibility? A sense of what was waiting in the United States for the Amerasians? If and when they reach the U.S., will they disappear into the Vietnamese community, never to be seen again? And given the state of race relations, what will happen to the African-American Amerasians? Will they still be "children of the dust"? It's one of those things you want to know and you don't want to know.

I turned around and went back to the van.

By the end of the trip I realized that this was a journey not of rediscovery but of discovery. The war will never be out of my life. I am who I am because of Vietnam and the Vietnamese—there's no use denying it.

Twenty-three years ago, when I returned home—exhausted, depleted, transformed into someone *I* didn't recognize—I had the distinct feeling (common among returning Vietnam veterans, I think) that this was not my country, not my time. I felt only a slight connection with my own blood kin; lifelong, childhood friendships were, simply, dead. Shortly after I came home Martin Luther King Jr. was shot, then Robert Kennedy was murdered, and that summer I drove a Chicago city bus through the Democratic National Convention—probably the worst summer job I ever had. It seemed as if the horribly bloody and pervasive ugliness of the war had followed me home, and whatever was going on I wanted no part of it. Could it be that veterans of the war in Vietnam are more intimately connected with the Vietnamese than with our own people and country? It is not the least of the curious and contradictory, ambiguous and paradoxical results of that contradictory, ambiguous, and paradoxical war.

For twenty-three years it was the war that was real and Vietnam that was the dream. But since coming home a second time, it is now the war that seems more a dream and Vietnam—seen by me as if for the first time—that is real. ■

July Index Sources

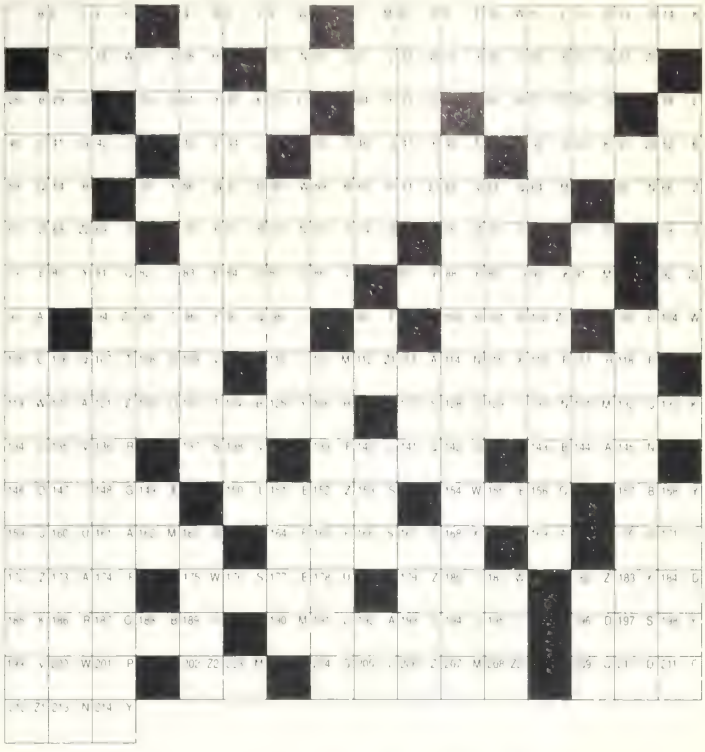
1,2 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (Washington); **3** U.S. Department of Commerce; **4,5** U.S. Department of the Treasury; **6** *Newsweek* Poll (N.Y.C.); **7** German Information Center (N.Y.C.); **8** Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany (Washington); **9** Simon Wiesenthal Center (Los Angeles); **10** Council for Inter-American Security (Washington); **11** Balkan Holidays (N.Y.C.); **12** California Department of Motor Vehicles (Sacramento); **13** American Council of Life Insurance (Washington); **14** Centers for Disease Control (Atlanta); **15** Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Washington); **16** National Center for Health Statistics (Hyattsville, Md.); **17,18** U.S. Bureau of the Census; **19** National Victim Center (Fort Worth); **20** *Harper's* research; **21** Johnson Smith Company (Bradenton, Fla.); **22** Texas Rangers (Dallas); **23,24** Nielsen Media Research (N.Y.C.); **25,26** Levi Strauss & Co. (San Francisco); **27** National Center for Health Statistics (Hyattsville, Md.); **28** *American Journal of Diseases of Children* (Chicago); **29** *Prognosis* (Prague); **30** Casinos Austria (Vienna); **31** Coin Coalition (Washington)/National Association of Convenience Stores (Alexandria, Va.); **32** New York City Department of Consumer Affairs; **33** Consolidated Information Service (Flanders, N.J.); **34** Research & Forecasts (N.Y.C.); **35,36** Frances Billous, Nicholas Christenfeld, Bernard Ravina, and Stanley Shackter, Columbia University (N.Y.C.); **37** William Lee, University of South Florida (Tampa); **38** National Institute of Dental Research (Bethesda, Md.); **39** American Meat Institute (Arlington, Va.).

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 103

by Thomas Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: The first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 75.



CLUES — WORDS

A. Foamy, custardlike Italian dessert
113 173 120 169 192 48
144 161 93 149

B. Suddenly and unexpectedly (4 wds.)
52 188 1 4 59 28
143 8 157 83 124
74

C. Jeans, as a trademark
211 82 105 40 76

D. Enlarges, extends
196 78 142 57 12 30 67 184
210

E. Control, power, rule; accepted source of information
79 25 164 155 177 151 103 70
118

F. Defeat, thrashing
9 23 88 139 96 174 116

G. Ceases; omits (2 wds.)
26 156 56 13 38 204 84 148
41

H. Coverings, as for roofs, floors, and, in England, sometimes heads
18 47 117 126 49

I. Unfeeling, unkind, ungentle
98 110 129 195 180

J. Correction made in a text
89 15 46 5 159 132 194 147
171 44

K. Taken as a premise, assumed, granted
133 50 185 14 90

L. Pearl, ivory, or eggshell, e.g. (hyph.)
205 21 150 39 2 191 11 140

M. Decorations
162 7 190 64 111 91 207 131
203

N. Harmful or destructive condition
19 114 65 213 130 145 72

O. Best by cleverness
187 85 128 146 20 122

P. Snacks
45 60 201 165 3 87

Q. Show plainly, manifest
106 81 63 53 97 141

R. Thin pieces of wood, metal, etc., used for leveling, filling spaces, etc.
136 71 186 100 54

S. Military equipment of a nation
101 176 163 77 153 166 197 137
127

T. Cowboy, or owner of a spread
123 90 107 24 95 69 73

U. Nightcrawlers, e.g.
134 209 160 108 193 170 29 167
178 189

V. Diplomatic delegations
135 199 86 109 43 138 62 17

W. Tender, loving
119 22 175 181 200 154 58 16
104 12 36 6

X. Exploratory survey, in brief
183 168 55 32 115

Y. Snappy retort
80 34 214 31 125 198 158

Z. Rushing, furious; rash
75 172 182 42 179 206 152 66
121

Z1. Captivate, fascinate
212 102 27 37 61 112 33

Z2. Simpletons
208 202 51 94 92 68 35

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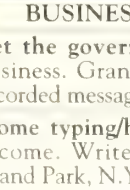
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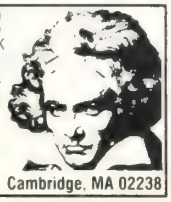
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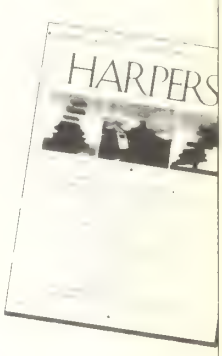
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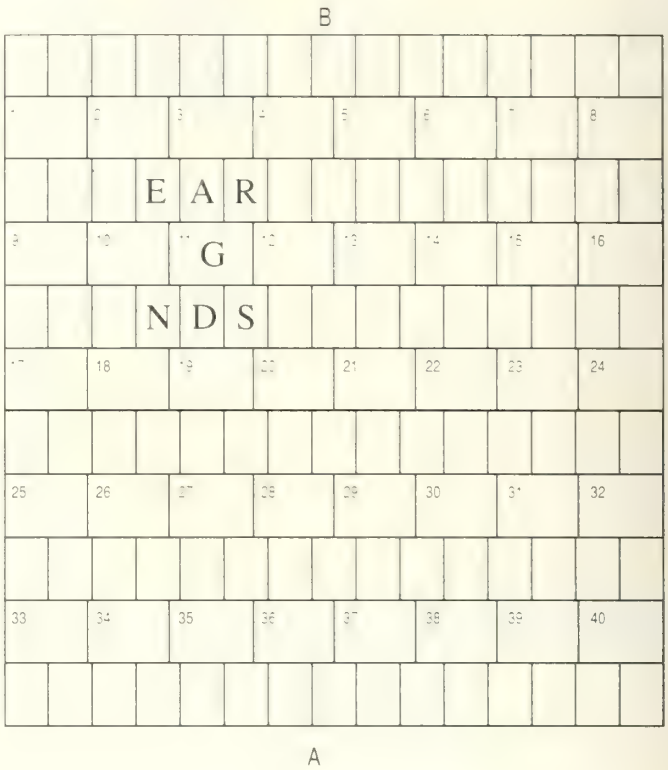
Vegetable Garden

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Egma of The Listener*)*

The diagram represents a garden in which there are twelve vegetables and two herbs planted in stretches of squares. Five of them occupy the eight-letter stretches numbered 1–8, 9–16, 17–24, 25–32, and 33–40 (one of them is two words). Four run consecutively around the perimeter from A to B clockwise (8,4,4,9); five more run from A to B counterclockwise (6,5,4,4,6).

To discover the identity of the plantings the solver must solve the forty clues and enter their five- or seven-letter answers. As the answer already entered at 11 shows, the letters of each answer are entered randomly in the appropriately numbered square and the four or six contiguous squares above and below it. Letter placement must be deduced from adjoining entries and the names of the vegetables and herbs.

Clue answers include three capitalized words and a variant spelling (23). The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 75.



1. Dodgers' first star out for throwing game (5)
2. Traveled about and cursed resorts around Italy's capital (7)
3. Guy dear to the French . . . Yogi Berra, e.g. (7)
4. This makes plane drop suddenly (and makes one holier, possibly) (7, *two words*)
5. Anticipate and deter boat I've scuttled (7)
6. Country air fouled around Arab sultanate (7)
7. Made use of mortar—German put to flight (7)
8. Impressionist painter flipped over old South (5)
9. Expensive plunge (5)
10. GNP rise could be a trap (7)
11. Dangers involved in diagrams like this (7)
12. He hikes the price and takes a lot off the top (7)
13. I have disturbed heartless lady deeply (7)
14. Silver film recycled in trash (7)
15. Some basketballers run Keds ragged (7)
16. Has an inclination to time some linemen (5)
17. Take clothes off bishop's back (5)
18. With regard to Navy mishap, returned beer (7)
19. Denies validity of Democrat planted in island (7)
20. Girl in 101C enduring work (7)
21. Stiff puts chief inside pen (7)
22. North reorganized General Staff armies (7)
23. Arouses, and slinked off (7)
24. Half of minuet that is used for Civil War ball (5)
25. Boy, the French spoon a lot (5)
26. More than one looker makes the camera move (7)
27. Factory fees announced for molds (7)
28. Trouble over—lady is king's concubine (7)
29. They stake book store out—about time (7)
30. Canary swallows true brandy cocktail (7)
31. This removes wrinkles from Reagan after depressing ego (7)
32. Not serious . . . needs minute in operating room (5)
33. Fired at, showing a bias (5)
34. Showed freshness to appear in bed (7)
35. Led chum astray—put covering on bed (7)
36. Adulterer's husband is almost silly with lady's odd characters (7)
37. He picks odd role, etc. (7)
38. He has no illusions concerning a deviate (7)
39. Awful sorry about old Bass drinks (7, *two words*)
40. Highly placed group of stars crossing into Rio nightly (5)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Vegetable Garden," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the September issue. Winners of the May puzzle, "Jigsaw," are Elaine Chojnowski, Haddam, Connecticut; Bob Wolson, Bellerose, New York; and Leon Garreston, Houston, Texas.

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A TRIP TO THE MOUNTAINS

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The Creation (and Corruption) of a New National Holiday

Frederick Turner Ron Carlson Richard Rhodes
Frank Gannon August Kleinzahler others

A COUNTER-REALITY GROWS IN HARLEM

Tuning In to 'The Gary Byrd Show'

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SUMMER WITH COWS ON THE ALPAGE

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Cover: *Detail from* Scene on the Columbia River, *John Mix Stanley, oil on canvas, 1852–1972.45, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth. Special thanks to Abbeville Press, publisher of* Art of the Golden West

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LETTERS

At the Zoo

Charles Siebert's May essay ["Where Have All the Animals Gone? The Lamentable Extinction of Zoos"] exhibits a sorry confusion between philosophy and nostalgia, as well as a bad case of anthropomorphism. Why *do* people visit zoos? "To look, at the most basic level, at ways we didn't end up being," as Siebert claims? Hardly. If that were the reason, people would also be attracted to jails, madhouses, and hospices. Siebert, for his part, visits zoos because he has fond memories of childhood visits—a valid reason. And there are many other reasons people visit zoos: education, distraction, contemplation. What is important is that the visitor come not with Siebert's nostalgia-blinded eyes but with eyes open to the lessons that zoologists have embedded in the exhibits.

The new natural-habitat zoos do not "hide" the animals or distance them from the public. By attempting to simulate a natural environment, even in the limited spaces allowed within the confines of an urban zoo, the goal of habitat zoos is to suggest to visitors that they are viewing a world *beyond* the zoo, beyond the city, beyond the borders of immediate experience—a world not otherwise accessible to them, but nevertheless a vital and important part of life. The animals are not "gone" just because the physical distance between them and the public has been increased. By permitting an animal to engage in behavior more natural than what is possible in the old city zoo, habitat exhibits close the distance between the worlds of the visitor and the animal. The caged polar bear Siebert so fondly remembers is as false an illustration of "evolution's slow-moving work" as is a jailed human of mankind's noblest potential.

Had Siebert done his homework, he would have discovered that the concept of habitat exhibits is not new but dates from before World War I, when the first such exhibit was built near Hamburg, Germany, in the private zoo of circus manager Carl Hagenbeck, who was influential in the design of a number of urban zoos in America. (Ironically, in a tragic expression of patriotism, it was the xenophobia accompanying that war that turned American zoos away from adopting more habitat exhibits.) The Bronx Zoo, which perhaps was as distant to Siebert growing up in Brooklyn as Hamburg, constructed an African habitat in 1941. Those of us fortunate enough to have been raised in the Bronx remember, with awe, the sight of a lion and its prey within sight of each other. (We knew, of course, that a moat separated the two, but no matter: We understood that the antelope the lion watched so intently meant more to the lion than just another exhibit.) No lion imprisoned within the damp cement walls of the lion house of any zoo I have seen has been closer to my understanding of "evolution's

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slow-moving work."

Siebert's errors derive from the limitations of the old city zoos. Because the animals were confined to bare cells not much larger than the average room of a city apartment, it was all too natural to confuse the viewer with the viewed, to ascribe to the animals the visitor's experience. Thus Siebert muses on the "happiness" of Rudy, the rhinoceros moved from Brooklyn to Michigan. What makes Siebert uneasy about the habitat exhibit is that it permits the human visitor to confront the differences between man and beast and, by avoiding any easy identification between the two, forces us to accept man's responsibility to animals.

Bernard Ferster
New Rochelle, N.Y.

Charles Siebert's lament on the extinction of traditional zoos was a testament to his contradictory sentiments, which were epitomized by the title and subtitle of the article. It is not the *loss* of animals that saddens the author as much as the disappearance of the cages through which he measures his evolutionary distance from those creatures. Siebert seems to require the spectacle of conquered animals in order to confront *himself;* and in extolling the caged zoo as a place where he can engage his soul, he celebrates mankind's antagonism toward nature.

It's a shame Siebert cannot experience the existential thrill he gets in the zoos when he sees a wild beast in the distance. For these encounters in traditional zoos are actually akin to observing the shockingly altered behavior of humans in prisons or in asylums. It is not wild animals that produce the desired effect on the author's psyche; he simply needs to be reminded of his humanness. Unfortunately, the caged misery of animals fills the bill superbly.

In exhibiting his nostalgia for entrenching animals in the misery of traditional zoos, and ourselves in pity, Siebert overlooks the new purpose of natural-habitat parks as breeding sanctuaries for species fac-

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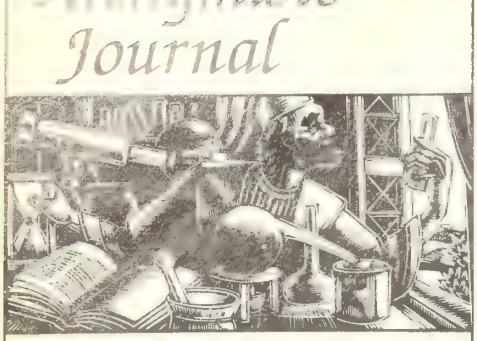
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ing extinction. Zoos, he doesn't seem to realize, no longer simply provide lunchtime amusement for nature voyeurs.

Dick Price
Ithaca, N.Y.

Charles Siebert thinks he's entitled to grumble about the end of jail-like zoos because, he writes, the animals aren't any happier in their new natural habitats.

Zookeepers know better. Birds that are free to flit about a simulated jungle, building nests where they please, and monkeys that spend their days roaming about an island of artificial rocks don't just *look* happier. They make babies. In natural habitats all over the country, animals that never bred before are reproducing. At the Central Park Zoo, for instance, zookeepers are shipping tropical birds and poison-arrow frogs to old-style zoos that are unable to breed their own. And the macaque monkeys have been at it with such enthusiasm that all four adult males had to be vasectomized in 1989.

I wonder, though, if Siebert even cares that he's wrong. His piece suggests that he's not really interested in animals, only in what they tell him about himself; he informs us that he liked to "leave [his] apartment...and find some solace" at the monkey house. Good old-fashioned cages confront us, he says, with "our own strange need to look" at animals. Even in the depths of a Central American jungle, Siebert's attention is not on his surroundings but merely on how weird *he* feels ("I kept invoking the day of the week to myself and city traffic sounds"). Thus what is lost on Siebert is that the new zoo exhibits suggest animals are not here to provide us with solace or even to stand for anything humanly comprehensible.

I feel sorry for Siebert, who will not climb out of himself even for a moment. But there's no curing him. "As a man is," wrote William Blake, "so he sees."

David Bereby
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Charles Siebert's response:

In most of the ape houses of old city zoos—the ones that some obtuse readers seem to think I was arguing for a return to because I dared admit to having memorable experiences there—one would come across that silly full-length mirror with the bars in front and a sign below that read: THE MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL OF ALL. As briefly as I can state it in the space allotted to me, my essay was a protracted look at ourselves in that mirror. My intention was to show zoos, both old and new, for what they ultimately are: reflections of our attitudes toward animals.

These attitudes are apparent in the peculiar anthropomorphism (merely *described*, not pined for, by me) behind the polar-bear incident in the old Prospect Park Zoo in Brooklyn, and in the current, though desperately late, knowledge of animals' natural habits and social groupings. Such knowledge has allowed us to promote the reproduction of species in captivity just to keep our zoos stocked or, in rare cases, to put the animals back where they came from (although this has required such actions as having to teach the zoo-bred creatures their instincts again or kill off their natural predators). I've even heard of zoo workers dressing up as female eagles to draw usable sperm from male eagles.

In the days of the old zoos, we held animals in our image. Now we're dressing up as them just to keep them with us a little longer. Either way, our slow, fitful progress toward a less than beastly living arrangement for and with our fellow creatures seems worthy of a lament.

Love and the "Anguish" Professors

My God, not poor old "Dover Beach" ["Debate the Canon in Class," Readings, April]! Assuming Older Male Professor and Young Female Professor actually had this idiotic discussion of Matthew Arnold's poem in the faculty lounge, it's obvious that neither is qualified to comment on the poem.

YFP makes two minor but arrogant assumptions, and gets so wound up she misinterprets the poem's most powerful and unmistakable appeal: She assumes a (male) speaker is asking a (female) listener to be true to *him* so that he will have the support and confidence he needs to make his way in the dangerous and stimulating world of men's affairs—in YFP's view, a "typically male" demand for a one-way commitment.

OMP, who supposedly has been teaching the poem for years, fails miserably to respond to these obvious openings in YFP's "argument." Instead, he attempts to defend the poem solely on the basis of aesthetics. Is this how he presents poetry to his students? No wonder they are consistently underwhelmed.

OMP should have tried this tack: The poem is an expression of late-Victorian melancholy/romanticism. The speaker mourns the fact that Western culture, in its rush to embrace modern thought and values, has abandoned its soul ("the Sea of Faith"), leaving the individual isolated in a world full of fear, pain, and violence. The speaker believes there is only one refuge left, that of love, commitment, and fidelity. For a supposedly overween ing era, pre-World War I, this is a worldview as stark as they come, and certainly not a pretty appeal to one-way dependence. The speaker plainly urges, "...let us be true *to one another.*" [Italics added.]

The author of this essay, Gerald Graff, asserts that students would be more enlightened and better motivated if only they could be privy to faculty-lounge debates such as this one. But see how YFP has mauled the poem until it fits into her bag of ideological preconceptions? And notice how OMP, after years of "teaching" the poem, is still unable to mount the most obvious defense, one that any second-year lit student could ad lib if confronted with the problem on a surprise essay test.

No, love, with all due respect to our estimable professors, for whose wisdom our parents are forking out five figures per annum, let us steal away, closing the faculty room door quietly behind us.

Mark E. Couch
Olympia, Wash.

If there is anything "phallocentric" *in* Arnold's poem, it would be implicit in the metaphor likening the human condition, in an age of a crisis of faith, to the state of armies (all male at the time) foolishly fighting in the dark. The poem becomes, then, an *attack* on phallocentric behavior, not an enactment of it, condemning what author Grace Paley calls men's "boom-boom bellicosity." But that's a stretch, making the vehicle of the metaphor its meaning.

America's recent use of smart bombs provides students with a newly enlivened frame of reference for Arnold's "ignorant armies." So, despite the sorties of embattled critics, "Dover Beach" lives on.

Neil D. Isaacs
Colesville, Md.

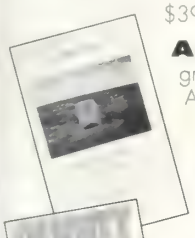
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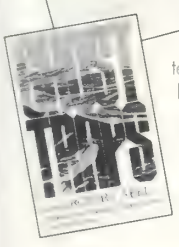


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NOTEBOOK

Tyromancy

By Lewis H. Lapham

The deterioration of every government begins with the decay of the principles on which it was founded.

—Montesquieu

The Supreme Court ruled in May that people who accept government money must say what the government wishes them to say. The ruling followed from the Court's interpretation of *Rust* v. *Sullivan* and forbade mention of the word "abortion" in any of the 4,500 clinics that receive federal funds and provide advice and care to as many as 4 million women in the United States, many of them frightened and most of them poor. The Court imposed its fiat by the narrow majority of 5–4, and it relied on a line of reasoning (supplied by Chief Justice William Rehnquist) that defined speech as a function of congressional subsidy. Because the government doesn't choose to fund the practice of abortion, then the government cannot talk about the practice of abortion. Speech becomes a privilege instead of a right.

Any reader who thinks that I exaggerate the arrogance of Justice Rehnquist's argument has only to read the two or three clumsy sentences with which he grinds the First Amendment into the pulp of sophism. As follows:

"The government can, without violating the Constitution, selectively fund a program to encourage certain activities it believes to be in the public interest, without at the same time funding an alternate program which seeks to deal with the problem in another way. In so doing, the government has not discriminated on the basis of viewpoint; it has merely chosen to fund one activity to the exclusion of the other . . ."

The chief justice makes the word "fund" a synonym for the word "viewpoint," and the reasoning is as autocratic as the reasoning that sustains the government's theory of "classified information." The four justices who joined Rehnquist's opinion (Justices Souter, Scalia, Kennedy, and White) presumably also share his inclination to recognize only those truths that appear in court with an acceptable financial statement. If the viewpoint is funded, it may be discussed; if the viewpoint is not funded, it cannot be introduced in polite company. A clinic retains permission to talk about abortion only on condition that it does so in a separate building under the disguise of a separate program that receives none of its funding from the federal government.

The Court's ruling is consistent with the squinting and repressive attitude of mind with which the government over the last decade has sought to dilute or eliminate as many civil liberties as could be brought up on charges of sedition. The expansion of the state's police powers (in the universities and regulatory agencies as well as the jails) has swelled its desire to impose on the American people the habits of obedience. Reading the announcements issued in Washington (whether by the Supreme Court, the White House, or the Pentagon), I hear the voice of an ascendant ruling class that sometimes confuses itself with the French nobility during the reign of Louis XIV and at other times with the Soviet politburo during the early years of the Cold War. Royal prerogative and ideological doctrine take precedence over undignified behavior and plain fact.

Justice Rehnquist and his associates apparently choose to ignore what they regard as the contemptible rabble they occasionally notice—in passing and at a distance—in the dingier precincts of Washington, D.C. The Court's ruling upholds regulations appended by an administrative bureaucrat i 1988 to the Public Health Servic Act passed by Congress in 197 Like the ruling, the regulation make no attempt to imagine th lives of the women condemned t bear the burden of the government moralism. The women who appl for help in the clinics under Rehn quist's jurisdiction cannot afford t go to Paris to buy perfume and th newest lines in contraception. Fe of them can afford the price of med ical insurance, much less the cost o their own physician. Many of then cannot read a fifth-grade grammar Of those among them who find themselves pregnant at the age o fifteen or sixteen, almost none pos sess the resources (emotional, finan cial, or social) to raise and educat the children born at the govern ment's command.

The Supreme Court holds al such evidence circumstantial an irrelevant. Compassion is the vice of liberals; knowledge is weakness and any deviation from the party line subverts the New American World Order. Any doctor receiving any fraction of federal money must never utter the word "abortion"; i the patient mentions the word, the doctor must say, solemnly and by rote (i.e., in the voice of a prison guard), "This clinic does not consider abortion to be an appropriate method of family planning." Instead of affirming a principle for the sake of its people, the government sacrifices its people to a principle as unforgiving as an Aztec bird god.

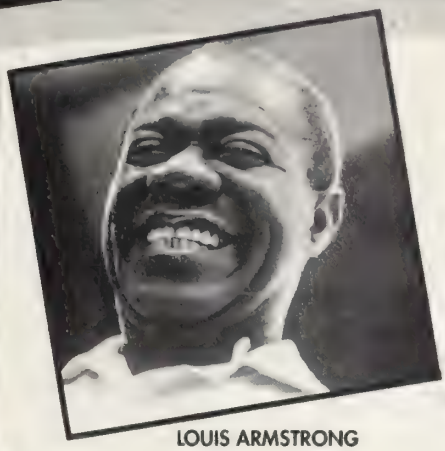
Among the justices who dissented from the majority opinion, Justice Harry A. Blackmun most forcibly stated the objections to what he construed as the negation of the constitutional right to free speech. As follows:

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...dition the receipt of its largesse upon the relinquishment of constitutional rights, it surely does not extend to a condition that suppresses the recipient's cherished freedom of speech based solely upon the content or viewpoint of that speech . . ."

Maybe Blackmun is persuasive because he writes in English (as opposed to the bureaucratic jargon assembled by Rehnquist), but I find his arguments convincing, and so I'm left to marvel at the damage a society can inflict on itself once it chooses to live in the land of wish and dream.

The United States derives its strength from the willingness of its citizens to ask questions and say what they mean. Democracy isn't supposed to be easy, quiet, orderly, or safe. It assumes conflict not only as the normal but also as the necessary condition of existence, and it allies itself with the freedom of mind and the continuing process of change. The demand for autocracy—for more laws, more rules, more regulations, more police, more prisons—speaks to the wish to make time stand still and denies, as if by totalitarian diktat or royal decree, the first of the principles on which the United States was founded.

Under the title *The March of Folly* the late Barbara Tuchman in 1984 published a set of instructive essays addressed to what she called the "surpassing wooden-headedness" exhibited by various states bent on the destruction not only of their own best interests but also of their existence. She classified the practice of misgovernment under four headings:

1. *Tyranny or Repression* (examples so numerous as to require no citation);

2. *Excessive Ambition* (cf. the Spanish Armada, Germany's twice-attempted conquest of Europe, etc.);

3. *Incompetence or Decadence* (the late Roman Empire, the last Romanovs, etc.);

4. *Folly or Perversity*. Under the fourth heading Tuchman took as her four texts Troy's welcoming of the Greek wooden horse; the misrule of six successive Renaissance popes who, by virtue of their spendthrift tastes for luxury and murder, incited the Protestant Revolt and Reformation; Britain's loss of North America in the late eighteenth century; and the American defeat in Vietnam, promoted by four presidents who comforted themselves with a succession of preposterous lies. In each instance Tuchman presents the portrait of a ruling class that no longer knows the difference between what is true and what it chooses to say is true.

Pope Sixtus IV (a.k.a. Francesco della Rovere) stages a banquet so elaborate that it invites comparison with the licentiousness of ancient Rome; Pope Alexander VI (a.k.a. Roderigo Borgia) makes a resplendent show of both his mistresses and his cavalry squadrons. It never occurs to either prince that somebody might notice his estrangement from Christian doctrine. The British House of Lords in the 1770s chooses to see the American colonists as a contemptible rabble, and General Thomas Clarke, aide-de-camp to King George III, boasts in the presence of Benjamin Franklin that "with a thousand Grenadiers he would undertake to go from one end of America to the other and geld all the males, partly by force and partly with a little coaxing." President Johnson evokes the laughter of the White House claque by referring to Vietnam as "that raggedy-ass little fourth-rate country."

The Supreme Court decision in the matter of *Rust* v. *Sullivan* satisfies Tuchman's criteria for an act of folly because it insists that the desire of a petulant ruling class is synonymous with judgment and reason and that words can be made to stand as surrogates for things. Rehnquist speaks for a majority, not only of the Court but also of the Washington oligarchy, when he rules that the American experiment has gone far enough and that the Republic no longer can tolerate the risk implicit in the freedom of speech and the freedom of thought.

Henceforth, says Rehnquist, the truth is a function of dogma. The government will pay to hear only what it wants to hear. Any statement that fails to conform to the pre-recorded political or religious announcement isn't welcome at the White House dance.

John Adams noticed precisely the same habit of mind in London in the years prior to the Revolutionary War. The ministers of the Crown were so disdainful of the American cause that they never troubled to send a representative, much less one of their own august company, to the far shore of the Atlantic Ocean to so much as glance at the cities of Boston or New York.

"The pride and vanity of that nation [Britain] is a disease," said Adams. "It is a delirium; it has been flattered and inflamed so long by themselves and others that it perverts everything."

Given the Supreme Court's current theory of the universe, I expect that we can look forward to further distinctions between funded and unfunded speech. Extended to the schools, Rehnquist's interpretation of *Rust* v. *Sullivan* can be made to inform the curriculum with whatever truths the government finds most flattering to its own image of itself. If a doctor can be forbidden to mention abortion, surely a teacher can be forbidden to mention Lincoln or Ho Chi Minh or the planet Uranus. If the government can discuss only what it has agreed to fund, then any institution taking money from the government (the National Weather Service, say, or the National Institutes of Health) would be bound to keep silent about any and all events that lack the authority of a congressional appropriation. A flood washes through the Mississippi Delta, but no federal official can acknowledge its arrival. The bubonic plague kills 12,000 people in East Los Angeles, but no federal official can say that the epidemic is anything other than a slander put about by the tabloid press or the Democratic Party.

Let reason and desire become one and the same, and the possible stupidities become as infinite as the

number of the fixed stars. Isidore of Seville affirmed that menstrual blood was a fluid dispensed by the Devil and that the merest touch of it caused blossoms to fade, grasses to wither, iron to rust, and brass to turn black. In colonial America, anyone caught eating mince pie was suspected of royalist sympathies. The host of beetles that ravaged the vineyard of St. Julian were commanded to appear in King's Court, and when they neglected the summons, a lawyer was appointed to speak on their behalf. The art of tyromancy divines the future in the coagulation of cheese.

The delirium of vanity and pride follows from the presumption of omnipotence. The American government at the moment does as it pleases, but instead of being met with objection, the ministers of the state find themselves swathed in applause. We betray our best hopes and principles in what was called a war in the Persian Gulf, and the country celebrates the defeat as if it were a victory. The savings and loan associations, and now maybe also the commercial banks, burden the public treasury with ruinous debt, but hardly anybody thinks to ask how it came to pass that so much was taken from so many by so few. The Supreme Court not only imposes financial conditions on the right to free speech but also restricts the right to habeas corpus (*McClesky* v. *Zant*) and rules (*Arizona* v. *Fulminate*) that the use of a coerced confession does not render a trial unfair. The government makes no secret of its contempt for the people whom it routinely plunders, but the people offer as little objection as the kitchen help in a Mafia hotel.

Sooner or later, of course, the foolishness and greed of the ruling class become so overbearing that the people lose respect for the name and image of authority. When the people also lose respect for the idea that their rulers supposedly serve and represent, the march of folly becomes a rout. Just as I can imagine Justice Rehnquist gazing anxiously into a vat of Brie, so also I can imagine him hiding from a host of beetles or an angry mob. ■

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BY MICHAEL POLLAN



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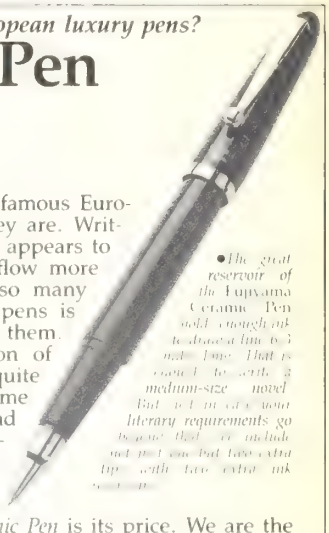
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HARPER'S INDEX

Amount pledged by the Tobacco Institute last year to a campaign to discourage smoking by minors : $10,000,000
Estimated profit U.S. tobacco companies earned last year from sales of tobacco products to minors : $250,000,000
Federal funds the National Cancer Institute will spend this year interviewing Latin American tribal healers : $100,000
Year Brazil's Supreme Court first ruled that it is illegal for a man to kill his adulterous wife to defend his honor : 1991
Chances that a prison inmate in India has not been tried : 1 in 2
Number of his first 77 decisions in which Supreme Court Justice David Souter voted with Chief Justice Rehnquist : 68
Weeks after President Nixon referred to Rehnquist as "Renschler" and a "clown" that he appointed him to the Court : 13
Number of times Nixon stopped to autograph food-ration cards during his trip to the Soviet Union last March : 1
Number of times the Soviet Union has voted with the United States in the UN General Assembly since 1989 : 22
Number of times Kuwait has : 19
Average number of Israeli apartments damaged in each Scud attack before Patriot missiles were deployed : 219
Average number damaged in each attack after the missiles were deployed : 350
Depth of the tank treadmarks left on Pennsylvania Avenue after the Gulf war victory parade in June, in inches : 1/2
Percentage of Panamanians who say that the U.S. invasion of their country in 1989 "wounded the national soul" : 71
Percentage of people in Quebec who would like their province to join the United States : 18
Estimated amount Japanese companies donated to American charities last year : $300,000,000
Total PAC funds that went to the 331 candidates challenging incumbents for House seats in 1990 : $6,898,631
Total PAC funds that went to the 79 incumbents who ran for re-election unopposed : $13,277,348
Chances that the CEO of a savings and loan received a raise last year : 3 in 5
Rank of pharmacists, clergymen, and doctors, among the professionals Americans say are the most honest : 1,2,3
Percentage of Americans who believe they have healed physical ailments "using the power of mind" : 25
Acres of land purchased for Maharishi Veda Land, a new-age theme park planned for Orlando, Florida : 450
Chances that a worker anywhere in the world is employed by the travel and tourism industry : 1 in 15
Total number of tourists who visited Italy last year : 27,000,000
Total number who visited Disney theme parks in the United States : 41,000,000
Amount of the toxic-waste fine that the EPA levied against Disneyland in 1990 : $550,000
Percentage of the electricity consumed in the United States that is used for air-conditioning : 13
Rank of nuclear power, among energy sources that Americans believe the country should rely on more in the future : 1
Percentage of Americans who say that a nuclear power plant in their own community would be "unacceptable" : 60
Estimated radiation dose absorbed by President Bush during his thyroid treatment, in rads : 4
Average radiation dose absorbed last year by a person living 100 miles from the Chernobyl reactor, in rads : 0.4
Pounds of opium stockpiled by the U.S. Defense Department to treat radiation sickness : 32,000
Ratio of the average amount of pesticide used on U.S. lawns to the amount used on U.S. cropland, per acre : 5:1
Amount David Eilers, a 15-year-old Atlanta resident, earned last year from his lawn-mowing service : $49,000
Estimated number of blades of grass in one acre of lawn : 564,537,600
Estimated number of grains of sand in one acre of beach : 2,000,000,000,000,000
Number of cigarette butts collected on U.S. beaches during the 1990 National Beach Cleanup : 531,828 (see page 23)
Number of bras, G-strings, and teddies : 33
Gallons of suntan lotion sold each summer at Empire Haven Nudist Park and Resort in Moravia, New York : 9
Maximum amount of sweat a sunbather can produce in an hour, in quarts : 1

Figures cited are the latest available as of June 1991. Sources are listed on page 76.
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READINGS

[Essay]

ON SEEING ENGLAND FOR THE FIRST TIME

From an essay by Jamaica Kincaid in the first issue of the revived quarterly Transition, *a journal of political and cultural criticism, published by Oxford University Press.* Transition *was founded in Uganda in 1961. In 1971, under political pressure from the Ugandan government, the journal moved to Ghana, where it was published for five years before folding. This issue, published in the United States, is the first to appear in fifteen years. Kincaid was born in St. John's, Antigua, and lives in Vermont. Her most recent book is* Lucy, *a novel.*

When I saw England for the first time, I was a child in school sitting at a desk. The England I was looking at was laid out on a map gently, beautifully, delicately, a very special jewel; it lay on a bed of sky blue—the background of the map—its yellow form mysterious, because though it looked like a leg of mutton, it could not really look like anything so familiar as a leg of mutton because it was England—with shadings of pink and green, unlike any shadings of pink and green I had seen before, squiggly veins of red running in every direction. England was a special jewel all right, and only special people got to wear it. The people who got to wear England were English people. They wore it well and they wore it everywhere: in jungles, in deserts, on plains, on top of the highest mountains, on all the oceans, on all the seas. When my teacher had pinned this map up on the blackboard, she said, "This is England"—and she said it with authority, seriousness, and adoration, and we all sat up. It was as if she had said, "This is Jerusalem, the place you will go to when you die but only if you have been good." We understood then—we were meant to understand then—that England was to be our source of myth and the source from which we got our sense of reality, our sense of what was meaningful, our sense of what was meaningless—and much about our own lives and much about the very idea of us headed that last list.

At the time I was a child sitting at my desk seeing England for the first time, I was already very familiar with the greatness of it. Each morning before I left for school, I ate a breakfast of half a grapefruit, an egg, bread and butter and a slice of cheese, and a cup of cocoa; or half a grapefruit, a bowl of oat porridge, bread and butter and a slice of cheese, and a cup of cocoa. The can of cocoa was often left on the table in front of me. It had written on it the name of the company, the year the company was established, and the words "Made in England." Those words, "Made in England," were written on the box the oats came in too. They would also have been written on the box the shoes I was wearing came in; the bolt of gray linen cloth lying on the shelf of a store from which my mother had bought three yards to make the uniform that I was wearing had written along its edge those three words. The shoes I wore were made in

land; so were my socks and cotton undergarments and the satin ribbons I wore tied at the end of two plaits of my hair. My father, who might have sat next to me at breakfast, was a carpenter and cabinetmaker. The shoes he wore to work would have been made in England, as were his khaki shirt and trousers, his underpants and undershirt, his socks and brown felt hat. Felt was not the proper material from which a hat that was expected to provide shade from the hot sun should have been made, but my father must have seen and admired a picture of an Englishman wearing such a hat in England, and this picture that he saw must have been so compelling that it caused him to wear the wrong hat for a hot climate most of his long life. And this hat—a brown felt hat—became so central to his character that it was the first thing he put on in the morning as he stepped out of bed and the last thing he took off before he stepped back into bed at night. As we sat at breakfast, a car might go by. The car, a Hillman or a Zephyr, was made in England. The very idea of the meal itself, breakfast, and its substantial quality and quantity, was an idea from England; we somehow knew that in England they began the day with this meal called breakfast, and a proper breakfast was a big breakfast. No one I knew liked eating so much food so early in the day; it made us feel sleepy, tired. But this breakfast business was "Made in England" like almost everything else that surrounded us, the exceptions being the sea, the sky, and the air we breathed.

THE STATEMENT "DRAW A MAP OF ENGLAND" WAS SOMETHING FAR WORSE THAN A DECLARATION OF WAR

At the time I saw this map—seeing England for the first time—I did not say to myself, "Ah, so that's what it looks like," because there was no longing in me to put a shape to those three words that ran through every part of my life no matter how small; for me to have had such a longing would have meant that I lived in a certain atmosphere, an atmosphere in which those three words were felt as a burden. But I did not live in such an atmosphere. When my teacher showed us the map, she asked us to study it carefully, because no test we would ever take would be complete without this statement: "Draw a map of England." I did not know then that the statement "Draw a map of England" was something far worse than a declaration of war, for a flat-out declaration of war would have put me on alert. In fact, there was no need for war—I had long ago been conquered. I did not know then that this statement was part of a process that would result in my erasure—not my physical erasure, but my erasure all the same. I did not know then that this statement was meant to make me feel awe and small whenever I heard the word "England": awe at the power of its existence, small because I was not from it.

After that there were many times of seeing England for the first time. I saw England in history. I knew the names of all the kings of England. I knew the names of their children, their wives, their disappointments, their triumphs, the names of people who betrayed them. I knew the dates on which they were born and the dates they died. I knew their conquests and was made to feel good if I figured in them; I knew their defeats.

This view—the naming of the kings, their deeds, their disappointments—was the vivid view, the forceful view. There were other views, subtler ones, softer, almost not there—but these softer views were the ones that made the most lasting impression on me, the ones that made me really feel like nothing. "When morning touched the sky" was one phrase, for no morning touched the sky where I lived. The morning where I lived came on abruptly, with a shock of heat and loud noises. "Evening approaches" was another. But the evenings where I lived did not approach; in fact, I had no evening—I had night and I had day, and they came and went in a mechanical way: on, off, on, off. And then there were gentle mountains and low blue skies and moors over which people took walks for nothing but pleasure, when where I lived a walk was an act of labor, a burden, something only death or the automobile could relieve. And the weather there was so remarkable because the rain fell gently always, and the wind blew in gusts that were sometimes deep, and the air was various shades of gray, each an appealing shade for a dress to be worn when a portrait was being painted; and when it rained at twilight, wonderful things happened: People bumped into each other unexpectedly and that would lead to all sorts of turns of events—a plot, the mere weather caused plots.

The reality of my life, the life I led at the time I was being shown these views of England for the first time, for the second time, for the one hundred millionth time, was this: The sun shone with what sometimes seemed to be a deliberate cruelty; we must have done something to deserve that. My dresses did not rustle in the evening air as I strolled to the theater (I had no evening, I had no theater; my dresses were made of a cheap cotton, the weave of which would give way after not too many wash-



"Sorry Game," by Sally Mann, on display this summer at the Tartt Gallery in Washington, D.C. A new series of Mann's color photographs are on exhibit at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art through September 8. "Sorry Game" was included in the 1991 Whitney Biennial. Mann lives in Virginia.

ings). I got up in the morning, I did my chores (fetched water from the public pipe for my mother, swept the yard), I washed myself, I went to a woman to have my hair combed freshly every day (because before we were allowed into our classroom our teachers would inspect us, and children who had not bathed that day, or had dirt under their fingernails, or whose hair had not been combed anew that day might not be allowed to attend class). I ate that breakfast. I walked to school. At school we gathered in an auditorium and sang a hymn, "All Things Bright and Beautiful," and looking down on us as we sang were portraits of the queen of England and her husband; they wore jewels and medals and they smiled. I was a Brownie. At each meeting we would form a little group around a flagpole, and after raising the Union Jack, we would say, "I promise to do my best, to do my duty to God and the queen, to help other people every day and obey the scouts' law."

But who were these people and why had I never seen them? I mean, really seen them, in the place where they lived? I had never been to England. England! I had seen England's representatives. I had seen the governor-general at the public grounds at a ceremony celebrating the queen's birthday. I had seen an old princess and I had seen a young princess. They had both been extremely not beautiful, but who among us would have told them that? I had never seen England, really seen it. I had only met a representative, seen a picture, read books, memorized its history. I had never set foot, my own foot, in it.

The space between the idea of something and its reality is always wide and deep and dark. The longer they are kept apart—idea of thing, reality of thing—the wider the width, the deeper the depth, the thicker and darker the darkness. This space starts out empty, there is nothing in it, but it rapidly becomes filled up with obsession or desire or hatred or love—sometimes all of these things, sometimes some of these things. That the idea of something and its reality are often two completely different things is something no one ever remembers; and so when they meet and find that they are not compatible, the weaker of the



From Stuff, a Boston monthly.

two, idea or reality, dies.

And so finally, when I was a grown-up woman, the mother of two children, the wife of someone, a person who resides in a powerful country that takes up more than its fair share of a continent, the owner of a house with many rooms in it and of two automobiles, with the desire and will (which I very much act upon) to take from the world more than I give back to it, more than I deserve, more than I need, finally then, I saw England, the real England, not a picture, not a painting, not through a story in a book, but England, for the first time. In me, the space between the idea of it and its reality had become filled with hatred, and so when at last I saw it I wanted to take it into my hands and tear it into little pieces and then crumble it up as if it were clay, child's clay. That was impossible, and so I could only indulge in not-favorable opinions.

If I had told an English person what I thought, that I find England ugly, that I hate England; the weather is like a jail sentence; the English are a very ugly people; the food in England is like a jail sentence; the hair of English people is so straight, so dead-looking; the English have an unbearable smell so different from the smell of people I know, real people of course, I would have been told that I was a person full of prejudice. Apart from the fact that it is I—that is, the people who look like me—who would make that English person aware of the unpleasantness of such a thing, the idea of such a thing, prejudice, that person would have been only partly right, sort of right: I may be capable of prejudice, but my prejudices have no weight to them, my prejudices have no force behind them, my prejudices remain opinions, my prejudices remain my personal opinion. And a great feeling of rage and disappointment came over me as I looked at England, my head full of personal opinions that could not have public, my public, approval. The people I come from are powerless to do evil on a grand scale.

The moment I wished every sentence, everything I knew, that began with England would end with "and then it all died, we don't know how, it just all died" was when I saw the white cliffs of Dover. I had sung hymns and recited poems that were about a longing to see the white cliffs of Dover again. At the time I sang the hymns and recited the poems, I could really long to see them again because I had never seen them at all, nor had anyone around me at the time. But there we were, groups of people longing for something we had never

seen. And so there they were, the white cliffs, but they were not that pearly, majestic thing I used to sing about, that thing that created such a feeling in these people that when they died in the place where I lived they had themselves buried facing a direction that would allow them to see the white cliffs of Dover when they were resurrected, as surely they would be. The white cliffs of Dover, when finally I saw them, were cliffs, but they were not white; you could only call them that if the word "white" meant something special to you; they were steep; they were so steep, the correct height from which all my views of England, starting with the map before me in my classroom and ending with the trip I had just taken, should jump and die and disappear forever.

[Transcript]

THE SECURITATE (STILL) WANTS YOU

From the transcript of a conversation that took place in September 1990 between Paul Baciu, a former officer of the Securitate, the Romanian secret police under the Ceauşescu regime, and Octavian Brinzei, an aspiring film director who had been recruited as an informer by Baciu in early 1989. When the Securitate was dissolved in January 1990, shortly after the Romanian revolution, Baciu, along with 6,000 other former Securitate agents, was hired by the Romanian Information Service, the country's new foreign-intelligence agency; the new agency is prohibited from investigating the government's political opponents. In September, Baciu contacted Brinzei for the first time since the revolution. Brinzei, who wanted to discontinue his work as an informant, secretly taped the discussion and released the tape to Expres, *a Bucharest investigative weekly, which published a transcript of the tape in October 1990. Following the disclosure of the transcript, Baciu was dismissed by the Romanian Information Service, which claimed that his domestic spying was a "personal initiative." The conversation was translated from the Romanian by Radu Tudor.*

PAUL BACIU: Did you ever write for *Zig-Zag* [an independent Romanian weekly]?

OCTAVIAN BRINZEI: They sent me to Brăila [a city in eastern Romania] to do a piece on crime.

BACIU: Who do you know at the paper?

BRINZEI: Our old acquaintance, Valentin V.

BACIU: Liana C., do you know her?

BRINZEI: No. I know Cornel M., the director.

BACIU: Did you know that *Zig-Zag* made the millionaires list [an informal list of wealthy companies]? Third or fourth place.

BRINZEI: Listen, what is this all about?

BACIU: I was discharged [from the Securitate], then reappointed. If you help us with some information, I could give you money and stuff.

[Character Sketch]

BARBIE'S OTHER

From the promotional material for the "World of Shani," a new line of "African-American Fashion Dolls" recently introduced by Mattel. The line includes three dolls: Shani and her friends Asha and Nichelle. Each doll has "different skin tones, hair styles, and facial features which mirror their ethnic diversity."

Shani is tomorrow's African-American woman. She's young, strong, beautiful, and fresh. She exemplifies every attribute insinuated by her Swahili name, which translates as "marvelous."

Shani has flair, expressed most poignantly in her excitement about life and the opportunities it has to offer. Shani knows what she wants and has the self-confidence to go after it by being the best she can be.

Shani is fun, but she is also serious. Not "just a pretty face," she has high aspirations for her future. She's also very conscious of her culture, which she views as a rich tapestry of history, custom, and family values.

With a look that moves easily across the terrains of West Africa to the sunny horizons of the Caribbean and on to the cosmopolitan metropolises of America, Shani is equally at home in *kente* cloth or glittering glamour. She often mixes patterns and textures to achieve just the right look to complement her distinctive beauty.

Shani exudes a natural beauty that shines right through her brilliant eyes, her long, full hair, and her trendsetting fashions.

Shani is many things. She is light and darkness. Sweetness and courage. Committed, sincere, and inquisitive.

Shani is what we want our little girls to be—the best of all worlds, a hope for the future which will make us all proud.

What kind of information?

: Information about weapons. There is word of a student uprising around October 1. They're all armed. I guess I can tell you; we should trust each other.

BRINZEI: Sure, sure.

[Death Threat]

DEAR WIDOW-TO-BE

From an anonymous letter received in May by wives of members of the South African Parliament's ruling National Party. South African police speculate that the letters were sent by right-wing Afrikaners attempting to prevent the dismantling of the remaining apartheid laws in June. The letter, which was written in Afrikaans, was obtained by Neil Fleming, a UPI reporter, and translated by the UPI staff in Johannesburg.

Dear Madam:

This is a warning to your husband, which we are sending through you because we want you to know that you could soon be a widow.

Your husband's involvement in the breakdown of apartheid will bring down judgment on him. His complicity in the destruction of the Whites' future can no longer be tolerated.

It has been decided to eliminate the entire National Party caucus, because the caucus is permitting the laws which protect the white race to be carelessly and irresponsibly scrapped. We will not wait until negotiations with the Blacks have begun before we act.

The cabinet, as well as those who will be taking part in direct negotiations with the Blacks, will be dealt with in a manner suitable to their leadership role in this treachery.

YOUR MAN IS HEREBY GIVEN A CHANCE TO DECIDE HIS OWN FATE.

He must either resign as a member of parliament before June 10 or he and his colleagues must ensure that a general election among Whites, to take place no later than September 11, is announced before June 10.

ONLY THESE RESPONSES TO OUR ULTIMATUM WILL PREVENT US FROM TAKING ACTION.

If you wonder why we are not acting openly, we want to point out that your husband and his colleagues are also involved in covert action. They are not dealing openly with Afrikaners, which demonstrates their lack of integrity.

BACIU: If you help me, depending on the stuff you come up with, you could make good money. For unusual information, I'll give you [Western] currency.

BRINZEI: That would be great!

BACIU: Solid, real stuff, not lies.

BRINZEI: Naturally.

BACIU: I see you're well connected at the Architecture Institute. Try to get into the students' leagues.

BRINZEI: I'm not a student anymore.

BACIU: It doesn't matter. Who pays them, who influences them? I'd like to know what they do, all you can find out. Try the Drama Academy; they're also involved. They were in the square. [In the spring of 1990, anti-government protesters demonstrated for two months in Bucharest's University Square; the demonstrations were broken up in June when President Ion Iliescu summoned thousands of miners to the square. The crackdown resulted in hundreds of casualties.]

BRINZEI: Yes, well, I was in the square myself. I know them all.

BACIU: They've formed all sorts of groups now. If you agree to help me—how should I put it?—you won't regret it. You won't.

BRINZEI: So the student organizations are preparing a coup?

BACIU: I don't know. There are rumors that something could happen at the beginning of the school year. The destruction at the Architecture Institute and at the university [during the miners' rampage] wasn't caused by the miners. The damage was done by the students; at the university the geology students did all the ransacking. Why would the miners steal all those rock samples and shit? How would they have known what to take?

BRINZEI: All right, how do we get in touch?

BACIU: I'll leave you a phone number. I've got yours. I'll give you my phone number, but I don't expect to find my name in—

BRINZEI: In what?

BACIU: Okay, I'll give you the number. I tell you honestly, you won't regret it. Did your father join the association of former political detainees?

BRINZEI: Yes, both he and my mother.

BACIU: See if you can pick up anything from your old man.

If we all aged half as well, the world would be a much more civilized place.

Some say the secret to the popularity of Ballantine's Finest Scotch is its artful blend of 42 single malt whiskies. Others proclaim the virtues of water, peat or heather, traces of which can be detected in every sip. But all discussions about Scotch must ultimately turn to the oak barrels in which it matures.

Newly distilled single malt Scotch enters the barrel naked, virtually clear, fiery in its potency, but somewhat lacking in manners. Over the years it acquires a golden hue, drawn from the wood itself. Air penetrates the porous surface, whispering hints of the outside world to the budding whisky inside. In turn, evaporation imparts a subtle sweetness to the surrounding air.



When the whisky emerges from its long metamorphosis, it has mellowed considerably. Tempered with soft Scottish water and merged into the Ballantine's Finest blend, each of the single malts confidently introduces itself to your glass, proud of its origin, asserting its flavor with the firm handshake of individual Scotch character.

Then a softer side to Ballantine's is revealed, a sentimental quality that blooms on the palate like a flower unveiling hidden color. The finish is gentle but firm, dignified and noble.

The true measure of civilization is simple qualities like these. Happily, they are available for the price of a bottle of Ballantine's Finest.

Please write. We welcome all correspondence.

Ballantine's

THE TRUE TASTE OF SCOTCH

Ballantine's Blended Scotch Whisky, 43% Alc./Vol. (86 proof). © 1990 Maidstone Wine & Spirits Inc., Los Angeles, CA. Imported by Maidstone, P.O. Box 8925, Universal City, CA 91608.

[illegible]: I'll try, but Father is cautious.

[illegible] talk to Ivan, find out what's going on at [illegible] sociation. Bring me everything you can find. We'll meet, we'll talk, we'll analyze it together. If you want lei [Romanian currency], that's fine; if you want Western currency, we'll make sure everybody is happy. Find out about professors as well, if you can. The professors—the younger ones—are deep in it. Find out what parties they're joining, what groups are being formed. Get in there and find out. I'm at the office from 7:30 to 8:30.

[Advertisement]

HOW GREEN IS YOUR JUNK MAIL?

From an advertisement for the mailing list of the National Audubon Society, in the March 25 issue of DM News, *an industry publication for direct-mail brokers. An estimated 5 million trees are destroyed each year to produce direct mail that goes unopened by recipients.*

THE DEFINITIVE AUDIENCE
FOR QUALITY OFFERS!

The National Audubon Society's members are some of the industry's most consistently mail-responsive consumers. No wonder so many major mailers rely on this repeatedly effective audience to reach their marketing goals!

The National Audubon Society takes your offer straight to highly motivated men (who make up 50 percent of our membership) and women who have joined this prestigious conservation organization. Here's an affluent, upscale audience that it will really pay for you to reach. With an average age of fifty, almost 65 percent of these members are college graduates, 46 percent are professionals, and their average income is $62,790. Plus, 33 percent maintain liquid assets of more than $75,000!

So it's easy to see why this list is so reliably responsive for quality offers such as publishing, fashions, gift catalogues, upscale general merchandise, fund-raising, club memberships, and home, family, and child products and services of all kinds.

The National Audubon Society is a truly choice audience that deserves to be part of your next campaign.

[Questionnaire]

MYANMAR'S CURIOUS SLORC

From a government form being distributed this year to civil servants, schoolteachers, and military officers throughout Myanmar, formerly Burma. The form, which recipients are required to complete, sign, and return in quintuplicate, is being distributed by the country's State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), a military junta that seized power in 1988 after a period of civil unrest and anti-government protest. In 1990 popular elections were held in Myanmar, and, despite harassment and censorship by the SLORC, the National League for Democracy (NLD) was elected in a landslide. The SLORC refused to allow the legislature to convene or the NLD's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, to take office; she remains under house arrest. Hundreds of Myanmar's citizens have been killed, tortured, and forcibly relocated by the SLORC in the three years since it took power, yet the NLD and other opposition groups remain popular. The SLORC is using the questionnaire below to detect and deter opposition among members of the military and the civil service; "incorrect" answers are severely punished.

1. Would you like to see the KIA, KNU, ABSDF, or NMSP [armed rebel groups] take power?
2. Do you support the underground organizations of the Burmese Communist Party [an opposition group]?
3. Would you accept Myanmar being ruled by a foreign country?
4. Would you like the CIA to intervene in Myanmar?
5. Do you support broadcasting in Myanmar by foreign radio stations, such as the BBC and the Voice of America?
6. Do you want Myanmar to lose its independence?
7. Do you support the leaders of the NLD?
8. Do you want the military to safeguard the country until a sound constitution is in place?
9. Were you a member of the Burma Socialist Program Party? [The BSPP ruled Burma as a one-party state from 1962 to 1988, when it was replaced by the SLORC. Ne Win, the head of the BSPP since it was founded, is rumored to still wield power in Myanmar, although behind the scenes.]
10. If so, reveal your party membership number.
11. Describe your responsibility in the party.
12. Do you accept that all civil servants must not take part in politics?
13. Do you know that disciplinary action will be taken against civil servants who violate this

[Advertisement]

THE SIMULATED FOREST



The photograph in this advertisement, which has appeared in American and Canadian magazines, was taken in Cathedral Grove, a nature park on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. According to an article in the Winter 1990 issue of Adbusters, *a quarterly magazine published in Vancouver, the photograph was staged: The mist was simulated using smoke machines; the rays of sunlight were produced with floodlights; and the deer were brought in from a nearby petting zoo. According to* Adbusters, *a spokesperson for the British Columbia Ministry of Tourism said the photo was not meant to be taken literally.*

regulation and take part in political activities?

14. Do you know that violating regulations can lead to civil servants being dismissed?

15. Did the military take sides in the 1990 election?

16. How long should the current period of systematic transition last?

17. Which organization is best able to maintain peace and stability in the country?

18. Which is the most suitable system of government for Myanmar?

19. Is it appropriate for someone who is married to a foreigner to be elected as the head of state? [Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the NLD, is married to an Englishman.]

20. Which should be given priority—the country or the individual?

21. For whose benefit is the military following its present course?

22. Considering that the military is shouldering the responsibility for the country's welfare, what is an appropriate way for the military to respond to an organization that considers the military its enemy?

23. Is it right to confront the military?

[Crisis Management Plan]

WASH, RINSE, SPIN

From the "Crisis Management Plan for the Clorox Company," prepared by Ketchum Communications, a Pittsburgh advertising and public-relations firm under contract to Clorox. The plan lists several "current environmental issues [that] hold potential for presenting a public-relations crisis for the Clorox Company" and recommends measures to diffuse each crisis. Although the plan was never submitted to Clorox's senior management for approval, several drafts were examined and discussed earlier this year by the company's public-

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Ask your banker today for more information and a Visa Business Card application. That way, even if your priorities get mixed up, at least your expenses won't.

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relations staff. A copy of the plan was leaked to Greenpeace in May; after the environmental group made the plan public, Clorox officials announced that the company was "not acting on [the plan's] recommendations."

No two crises are the same. While some crises may be anticipated, they are almost never wholly predictable. These "scripts," which attempt to pinpoint some of the issues that could arise over the next year, are presented only as examples of how the Crisis Management Plan would be applied in a real situation.

CRISIS SCENARIO #1:
"CHLORINE-FREE BY '93"

The Issue:

Greenpeace has announced a worldwide effort to rid the world of chlorine by 1993. They call it "Chlorine-Free By '93." So far, press attention in the United States has centered more on the antics Greenpeace employs to hype the situation than on the actual concerns Greenpeace has about chlorine. In Europe, however, the message has been hitting home more directly, and public response has begun to show up in decreased use of household chlorine bleach in some areas.

Worst-Case Event:

Greenpeace activists arrive at Clorox corporate headquarters [in Oakland, California] with signs, banners, bullhorns, and several local television crews and proceed to launch a rally. On the side of the building the demonstrators hang a large banner reading CHLORINE-FREE BY '93—GREENPEACE. They release the results of a new "study" linking chlorine exposure to cancer. Two local network affiliates pick up the piece and go live on their noon news with a remote broadcast. AP Radio and the *San Francisco Chronicle* interview three unsuspecting Clorox employees, on their way to lunch, who agree that the safety of chlorine may be in question. Clorox Corporate Communications receives several calls from local and national press seeking comments.

Recommended Response:

Make sure this is a one-day media event, with no follow-up stories, that results in only minimal and short-term damage to Clorox's reputation and market position.

Strategy:

—Crisis Team announces that the company will seek an independent, third-party review of the Greenpeace study and promises to report back to the media. (While this may seem to be

[Inventory]

WHAT THE TIDE BROUGHT IN

From the list of debris collected last fall during the 1990 National Beach Cleanup, an annual event coordinated by the Center for Marine Conservation in Washington, D.C. During the three-week cleanup, volunteers collected 4,227,791 pieces of trash from U.S. beaches.

Plastic	
Bags:	
food	178,856
trash	51,930
Bottles:	
beverage	100,036
bleach	22,071
Buckets	8,156
Cigarette butts	531,828
Cigarette lighters	26,622
Diapers	9,245
Fishing line	32,174
Hard hats	964
Rope	93,736
Six-pack holders	34,722
Straws	140,843
Syringes	3,738
Tampon applicators	17,125
Toys	15,628
Glass	
Bottles:	
beverage	169,513
food	15,246
Fluorescent light tubes	3,210
Light bulbs	9,580
Rubber	
Balloons	26,536
Condoms	3,741
Gloves	11,169
Tires	7,772
Metal	
Bottle caps	96,528
Cans:	
aerosol	14,177
beverage	168,779
55-gallon drums:	
rusty	2,329
new	366
Cloth	
Pieces of clothing	48,424

report will gain little media attention if it supports the company's position; its primary value will be to cause reporters to question Greenpeace's [illegible]ity and scientific capabilities.)
—N[illegible] independent scientists who will talk about chlorine are given to the media. (A list of these scientists should be kept on file.)
—A research firm begins random telephone survey of 500 consumers to assess the impact of the event. Based on the results (available the next morning at 9:00 A.M.), team will decide on further steps.

CRISIS SCENARIO #2:
"BACK TO NATURAL"

The Issue:

The movement back to more "natural" household cleaning products is gaining momentum as consumers eagerly look for ways they can contribute to a cleaner planet. This movement was spawned in 1990 by the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day. Columnists, authors, and activist groups scrambled to develop "Earth-saving" tips for the average American. The resulting herd of books, brochures, and media coverage espoused ridding the home of "hazardous" materials and replacing them with safer natural cleaning products, such as vinegar and borax.

Unfortunately, these authors often make exaggerated, misleading, and inaccurate claims about the efficacy of these "natural" products. They also exaggerate the environmental and health "hazards" of modern cleaning products. But since these authors are seen as "environmental" experts, their claims are largely taken as gospel.

This movement will receive another boost of momentum as America, once again, gears up for its annual [1991] Earth Day observances. As a result, a whole new round of simplistic and misguided ways to "save the Earth" are likely to be espoused by those seeking to profit from the environmental bandwagon. Liquid chlorine bleach could become a target for these "Save the Earth" activists in 1991–92.

Worst-Case Event:

A prominent newspaper columnist targets the environmental hazards of liquid chlorine bleach in an article, which is syndicated to newspapers across the country. The columnist calls for consumers to boycott Clorox products, since "Clorox and consumers who use household liquid chlorine bleach are guilty of widespread contamination of the environment." Local chapters of Greenpeace take up the cause by spearheading "anti-Clorox" picketing campaigns outside supermarkets in ten major cities across the country. The picketing campaign receives widespread local and national media coverage, resulting in a dramatic drop in sales of Clorox products within several weeks. In response to these concerns, Congress schedules hearings on the environmental safety of liquid chlorine bleach products.

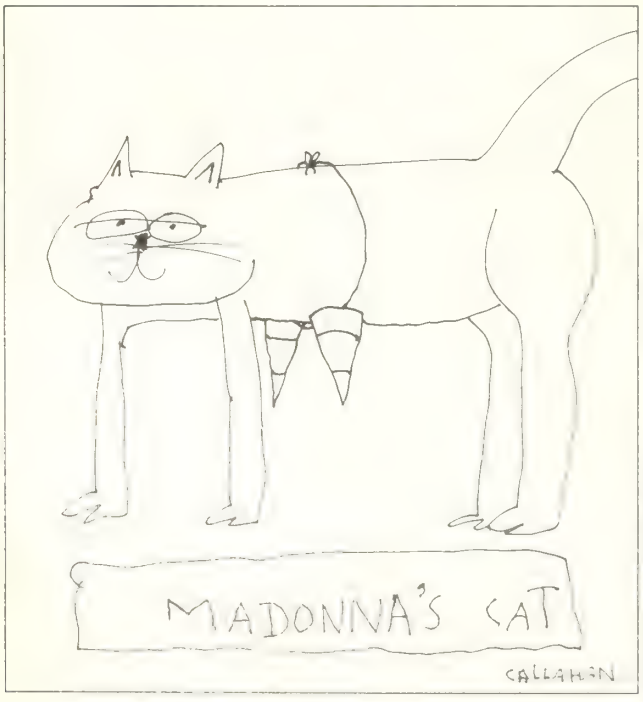
Recommended Response:

This event is every company's worst nightmare. The company must be prepared to take aggressive, swift action to protect its market. Because Clorox is a consumer product, this event has the potential of turning into the next "Alar."

Objective: Restore Clorox's reputation as quickly as possible. This cannot become a debate on the "science," because the issue is too emotional.

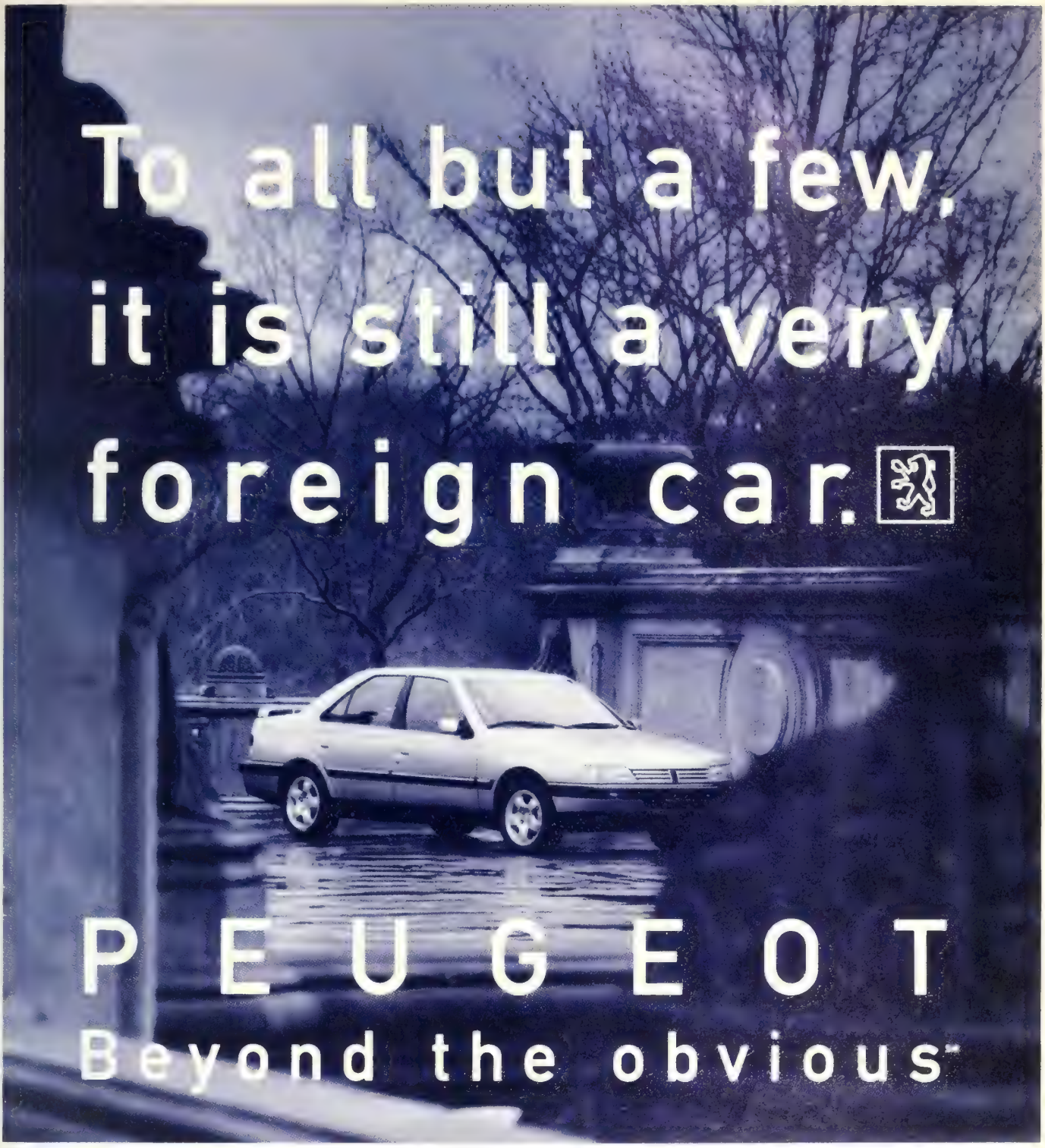
Strategy:

—Wherever possible, use actual rank-and-file employees and their families to act as spokespeople to support the company. (Prior planning by the Crisis Team has made sure that employees have been kept informed about this issue and relieved of their concerns well in advance of this crisis.)
—An independent scientist is sent to meet with the columnist and discuss the issue. Teams of scientists are dispatched to conduct media tours in the ten cities that



From the San Diego Union.

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WISCONSIN: LAND OF SELF-PROMOTION

From a list of tourist slogans for Wisconsin towns that appeared in the 1990 annual report of the tourism division of the Wisconsin Department of Development. The list was compiled by David T. Muench, a community-resource development specialist at the University of Wisconsin in Appleton.

Babcock—Where the Last Passenger Pigeon Was Killed
Bear Creek—Home of the World's Largest Sauerkraut Plant
Black Earth—The Only Black Earth in the World
Bloomer—Jump Rope Capital of the World
Bonduel—Spelling Capital of Wisconsin
Boscobel—Birthplace of the Gideon Bible
Cambridge—The Umbrella City
Cumberland—Rutabaga Capital
Delavan—Clown Town, USA
Edgerton—Tobacco City (formerly Tobacco Capital of the World)
Ellsworth—Cheese Curd Capital of Wisconsin
Elmwood—UFO Capital of the World
Hurley—Where Highway 51 Ends and the Fun Begins
Juda—Buffalo Roast Capital of Wisconsin
Kewaskum—Gateway to the Kettle Moraine
Lake Tomahawk—Snowshoe Baseball Capital of the World
Lodi—Home of Susie the Duck
Mineral Point—The City Where Wisconsin Began
New Glarus—America's Little Switzerland
Pardeeville—Watermelon Seed Spitting Capital
Park Falls—Ruffed Grouse Capital of the World
Peshtigo—Home of the Great Peshtigo Fire
Pulaski—Polka Town
Ripon—Birthplace of the Republican Party
Sauk Prairie—Cow Chip Throwing Capital
Sheboygan—Bratwurst Capital of the World
Somerset—Tubing Capital of the World
Sparta—Home of the Big Fiberglass Animals
Spring Valley—Home of the Largest Earthen Dam in the Midwest
Tomah—City of Special Events
Two Rivers—Birthplace of the Ice Cream Sundae
Waunakee—The Only Waunakee in the World

Greenpeace has targeted.
—Fact sheets and brochures are distributed to all the affected supermarkets, and company representatives visit each of the supermarkets to provide support.

The team should also consider the following actions:
—Advertising in major markets, using Clorox employees and their families, who will testify to their faith in the product.
—Industry association advertising campaign—"Stop Environmental Terrorism"—calling on Greenpeace and the columnist to be more responsible and less irrational in their approach.
—Enlisting the support of the union, since jobs are at stake.
—Conducting research to determine if and how a slander lawsuit against the columnist and/or Greenpeace could be effective.
—If the situation grows truly desperate, the team agrees to consider pulling the product off the market, pending a special review.

CRISIS SCENARIO #3: "NTP STUDY"

The Issue:

Although initial results from the study done by the National Toxicology Program [an agency that evaluates potentially hazardous chemicals for the Department of Health and Human Services] assessing the toxicity of chlorinated drinking water were equivocal, researchers have not totally exonerated chlorine as a potential animal carcinogen. Currently, researchers are re-analyzing the NTP testing methodology and animal data, which found tumors in one species of female test animals, to determine whether these tumors are significant. At least one scientist adviser to the chlorine industry has voiced concern that the NTP analysts could conclude that chlorine may possibly be an animal carcinogen. In light of U.S. regulatory policy, a link with cancer—even as a possible animal carcinogen—could trigger public concern and harsh regulatory action against this important chemical.

Worst-Case Event:

The final NTP study analysis concludes that chlorine is, indeed, an animal carcinogen. On the day the study is announced, Greenpeace holds a satellite news conference in Washington, New York, and San Francisco to launch a concerted campaign to eliminate all uses of chlorine in the United States. The news conference receives widespread national media coverage. A number of television reporters use a Clorox bottle to illustrate "dangerous" products produced with chlorine. The Environ-


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JOHN M. WILLIAMS

"Camouflaged History," by Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler. From Places With a Past: New Site-Specific Art in Charleston, *an exhibition sponsored by the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. in Charleston, South Carolina. The show, which began in May, consists of twenty installations that use the city of Charleston as a backdrop. Ericson and Ziegler painted the home of a Charleston resident using the 72 commercial paint colors that have been designated as "historic" by the Charleston Historical Society; the title of each color (named for an aspect of the city's history) is also painted on the house. When the exhibition ends this month, the artists will repaint the house in a color of the owner's choice. Ericson and Ziegler live in New York City.*

mental Protection Agency decides to re-evaluate and severely tighten its regulations on the use of chlorine in manufacturing, causing another round of negative media coverage.

Recommended Response:

Objectives: Forestall any legislative action pending further review of the NTP report and subsequent human and animal studies; maintain consumer loyalty.

Strategy:

—Through the Chlorine Institute, third-party scientific experts are brought to Washington to testify and advise both Congress and the EPA. The institute proposes a re-evaluation of the report as well as subsequent studies to provide definitive answers to the questions raised in the report.

—Media briefings with key environmental and consumer reporters and with other interested media are held by industry, company, and independent spokespeople.

—Third-party spokespeople are scheduled for major television and newspaper interviews.

—Industry generates grass-roots letters to legislators calling on them to show restraint, letters designed to show that Greenpeace's overreaction is not causing widespread consumer concern.

[Review]

VEWY, VEWY VIOWENT

From the capsule review of the movie The Third Animation Celebration, *in the April 15 issue of* Entertainment Research Report, *a biweekly published in Boca Raton, Florida. The newsletter, which features summaries of current movies, is designed "to make you aware of...movie content so that you can make decisions for yourself and for your family." It was started in 1990, after one of its founding editors was made "uncomfortable" by "the excessive swearing and references to oral sex" in* Ferris Bueller's Day Off. Animation Celebration *is*

described by the newsletter as a full-length "compilation of animated and Claymation shorts chosen from the International Film Festival circuit."

LANGUAGE

Name of the Deity used as profanity.....6
British expletive.....1
Reference to a character as "anal-repulsive"...1

VIOLENCE

Graphic death:

Giant animated cigarette consumes character as he struggles (with chewing sounds); his skull and bones are then expelled.

Animated man puts gun to temple, pulls trigger; his head blows up.

Implied death:

Animal flattened by truck and picked up with spatula as driver fills "quota."

Offscreen shooting of animated bird.

Animated knife and fork chase and eat mobile fruit, which have dropped from paintings on wall.

Incidents with physical battering:

One lava lamp chases and jumps on another, destroying it.

Claymation character steps on and walks over woman and dog.

Two men hit each other, each knocking the other's head off, then put the heads back on and repeat sequence.

Animated animals fight.

Incidents with property damage:

Claymation man opens records in store, takes a bite from each one, and tosses each one aside.

Stained-glass window broken by animated coughing man.

Explosion emanates from animated man's nose.

RELATIONSHIPS / CONDUCT

Animated pigeon eats food regurgitated by other animated characters.

Dog drinks from filthy toilet.

Cat vomits hair balls in prolonged sequence.

Man coughs skull out of head, head deflates, he puts skull back into head, eyeballs pop out and hang down on his cheeks, library falls down around him, man passes "gas" and then stops coughing.

Man crushed by falling bookshelves.

Man pulls large thing from nose.

Man crank-starts himself through his nose; as he places food in his mouth, it is ejected from his ears.

[Interview]

SHAKESPEARE'S FREUD

From an interview with Harold Bloom in the Spring 1991 issue of The Paris Review. *Bloom is the author of numerous works of criticism, including* The Anxiety of Influence, The Visionary Company, *and, most recently,* The Book of J. *He currently holds appointments at both Yale University and New York University.*

INTERVIEWER: You teach Freud and Shakespeare.

BLOOM: Oh, yes, increasingly. I keep telling my students that I'm not interested in a Freudian reading of Shakespeare but a kind of Shakespearean reading of Freud. In some sense, Freud has to be seen as a prose version of Shakespeare, the Freudian map of the mind being in fact Shakespearean. There's a lot of resentment about this on Freud's part because I think he recognizes it. What we think of as Freudian psychology is really a Shakespearean invention, and, for the most part, Freud is merely codifying it. This shouldn't be too surprising. Freud himself says, "The poets were here before me," and the poet in particular is necessarily Shakespeare.

But I think it runs even deeper than that. Western psychology is much more a Shakespearean than a biblical invention, let alone, obviously, a Homeric, or Sophoclean, or even Platonic, never mind a Cartesian or Jungian invention. It's not just that Shakespeare gives us most of our representations of cognition as such; I'm not so sure he doesn't largely invent what we think of as cognition. I remember saying something like this to a seminar consisting of professional teachers of Shakespeare, and one of them got very indignant and said, "You are confusing Shakespeare with God." I don't see why one shouldn't, as it were. Most of what we know about how to represent cognition and personality in language was permanently altered by Shakespeare.

The principal insight I've had in teaching and writing about Shakespeare is that there isn't anyone before Shakespeare who actually gives you a representation of characters or human figures speaking out loud, whether to themselves or to others or both, and then brooding out loud, whether to themselves or to others or both, on what they themselves have said. And then, in the course of pondering, undergoing a serious or vital change—becoming a different kind of character or personality, and even a different kind of mind. We take

utterly for granted in representation. But n't exist before Shakespeare. It doesn't happen in the Bible. It doesn't happen in Homer or Dante. It doesn't even happen in Euripides. It's pretty clear that Shakespeare's true precursor—where he took the hint from—is Chaucer. But Chaucer only does it in fits and starts, and in small degree. Shakespeare does it all the time. It's his common stock. The ability to do that, and to persuade one that this is a natural mode of representation, is purely Shakespearean. We are now so contained by it that we can't see its originality anymore. But the originality of it is bewildering.

[Letter]

THE ANXIETY OF INFLUENCE (CONT'D)

From a letter sent to Ted Turner in June by writer Brian McCormick and Carole Seborovski, an artist. In 1989 Turner established the Turner Tomorrow Award, a prize of $500,000 for the best novel incorporating "a plan to save the whales, save the rain forests, save the atmosphere, and prevent nuclear war." McCormick and Seborovski submitted an entry last fall, entitled How Earth Was Saved by Einstein the Whale, *in which Albert Einstein, reincarnated as a whale, "gets all his newfound whale-friends to swallow all the nuclear submarines in the world and take them to the deepest, darkest, underwater cave." Though only one page long, the novel addressed all four world problems specified in the contest rules. Nevertheless, it was rejected in November on the grounds that the rules called for a minimum length of 50,000 words. In June the prize was awarded to Daniel Quinn, whose novel,* Ishmael, *concerns philosophical discussions between a man and a great ape.*

Dear Mr. Turner:

Having entered the enclosed novel, *How Earth Was Saved by Einstein the Whale*, in your Turner Tomorrow Award competition, we were disturbed to learn that you have chosen a very similar novel, *Ishmael*, as the winner. We sent you our novel in good faith and were shocked to discover that you and the author of *Ishmael* had stolen our idea. We are listing below only a few of the more obvious similarities between Mr. Quinn's novel and our own:

Ishmael	*Einstein the Whale*
Philosophical dialogue between a human and a great ape.	Philosophical dialogue between Einstein and his whale-friends.
A great ape helps mankind save the rain forests and prevent nuclear war.	A whale helps mankind save the rain forests and prevent nuclear war.
Great apes are big mammals.	Whales are big mammals.
Ishmael was trapped in the belly of a whale.	Einstein was trapped in the belly of a whale (his mother).

But our novel is superior to Mr. Quinn's novel for the following reasons:

(1) Our whale can swim and build rockets, whereas Mr. Quinn's ape does nothing but sit around talking all day;

(2) Einstein the whale is smarter than Mr. Quinn's great ape and Ishmael *combined*;

(3) Einstein the whale was once a human, and the reader therefore sympathizes with his plight (of being a whale), whereas an ape will always be just an ape trying to get ahead;

(4) Our plot is action-oriented and full of surprise plot twists;

(5) Our novel is a page turner (although it is only one page long), because the reader wants to know if Einstein the whale will loosen up and meet Miss Right and live happily ever after in a nuclear-free rain forest.

We are sending copies of this letter to our lawyers and to members of the media in order to focus world attention on this injustice.

Sincerely,
Brian McCormick
Carole Seborovski

[Essay]

IN THE STREETS OF NEW YORK NIGHT

From Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York, *by Luc Sante, to be published next month by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Sante lives in New York City.*

At night sometimes in certain parts of the city, usually in those remaining streets that are left deserted, usually in winter, but sometimes in other seasons if the streets are sufficiently forsaken, the past can be seen as if through a smeared window. Sometimes this effect occurs only for an instant: when you're walking back from someplace with a head crammed with company and music and sensations, to a point

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☐Painkillers that make your headache worse

☐Costs not covered by health insurance contract can be covered if you know the ropes

☐How to deduct all your medical bills *without* first subtracting 7.5% of gross income. Lots of people do it and never get in trouble. What's more, their ploy is perfectly legal

☐Quick look at sticker price plus simple arithmetic reveals minimum figure car dealer will accept

Two famous cold remedies that make you sicker if taken together

☐Outwit mugger in self-service elevator

☐How to deposit check marked payment in full from someone who still owes more money without losing your right to collect the rest

☐What those peel-off IRS labels on your tax return say about you. How they help the IRS

☐Withdraw IRA money before age 59½ if needed, and pay penalty. Beats any other form of saving

☐Why couples who have signed mutual wills should tear them up and draft separate ones

☐How to deduct family vacation as business expense. Possibilities your accountant never showed you

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☐How to use sleeping pills without becoming addicted

☐How to take parent as dependent without providing 50% of support

☐How to collect interest from two money market funds at same time on same spare cash

Skin caught in zipper. Quick fix

☐Legal way to deduct gambling losses

☐How to know when it's time to sell a stock, recognize a real downward trend, get out before issue takes big tumble

☐Insurance everybody buys but nobody needs

☐Numbers that should never be used for combination lock (Professional burglars try them first.)

☐What never to tell an insurance adjuster. First thing said after loss can be worst mistake

☐Stop a headache by pressing secret spot on arm

☐Best times to get standby seat on any airline

☐How to check in and out of crowded hotel without standing in line

☐What surgeons don't tell you

Where to hide valuables in hotel room

☐What you don't have to tell a tax auditor. How to prevent a "fishing" expedition through your records

☐How to get discounts at stores that say they don't give any

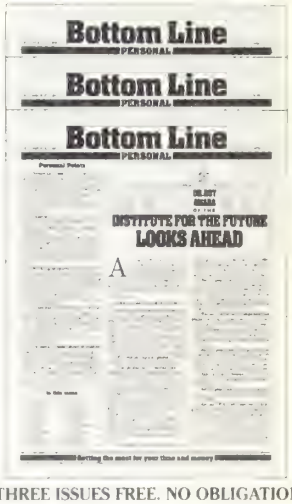
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all new sensations dissipate, on some street on the middle West Side lined with jobbers and import showrooms and loading docks and shuttered luncheonettes, or on a street on the Lower East Side where the intersections have no stoplights and everything is nailed down and dark and the only people to be seen dart by as furtively as wraiths. There will be no traffic, and the streetlights will seem to shrink back into their globes, drawing their skirts of illumination into tight circles, and the rutted streets reveal the cobbles under a thin membrane of asphalt, and the buildings all around are masses of unpointed blackened brick or cacophonies of terra-cotta bric-a-brac or yawning cast-iron gravestones six or eight stories tall. This is the sepulcher of New York, the city as a living ruin.

It is also the bridge to the past, the past that shares the same night as the present, even if it inhabits a different day. The night is the corridor of history, not the history of famous people or great events but that of the marginal, the ignored, the suppressed, the unacknowledged; the history of vice, of error, of confusion, of fear, of want; the history of intoxication, of vainglory, of delusion, of dissipation, of delirium. It strips off the city's veneer of progress and modernity and civilization and reveals the wilderness. In New York City it is an acculturated wilderness that contains all the accumulated crime of past nights stretching back at least as far as the hangings after the Slaves' Plot of 1741. Every night in New York possesses history this way, as a Walpurgis Night of all nights, and it is not an illusion. It is the daytime that is a chimera, that pretends New York is anyplace, maybe with bigger buildings but just as workaday, with a population that goes about its business and then goes to sleep, a great machine humming away for the benefit of the world. Night reveals this to be a pantomime. In the streets at night, everything kept hidden comes forth, everyone is subject to the rules of chance, everyone is potentially both murderer and victim, everyone is afraid, just as anyone who sets his or her mind to it can inspire fear in others. At night, everyone is naked.

On any given night, any window can be in 1840, with a woman waiting to dump a bucket of ashes on the passerby's head, so that people can come out from the shadows and pick the writhing body clean of money, jewelry, boots, coat, hat, and maybe slit its throat. Any corner can be in 1860, with the walker hit in the back of the head with a sash weight and taken to a cellar to be stripped, to wake up hours later as a laborer on a ship headed for points east or south. Any passage can be in 1880, with men listening for the rustle of a skirt before they leap out and chloroform the pedestrian, who will come to in an obscure mining town as the inmate of a brothel miles from anywhere. Any street where the lights have gone out can be in 1900, with the policeman who rushes in to answer a cry for help falling into an open manhole or taking a stretched wire in the windpipe. Any unfamiliar bar can be in 1920, with the customer smilingly served four ounces of ethyl alcohol laced with chloral hydrate. And any spot can find the subject possessed of nothing at all in the world but a cudgel, or a stevedore's hook, or a brickbat, or a garrote, or a bungstarter, and in desperate need of money.

Night has its own hierarchy, composed of those who hide or go unnoticed in the daytime. During the day, they sleep or recede into the masonry or are invisible to optimistic and responsible parties or pose as something they are not. The maimed and disfigured are visible to the rest of the population only after nightfall; then the eye can't stray off in another direction. Prostitutes sleep during the day, as do pimps and footpads and moll-buzzers and horse poisoners and mayhem artists. Swindlers during the day look like bank clerks, and fences like shopkeepers. They can be seen at night, not working but spending their take in saloons and disorderly houses. The saloons have their populations of clients who come in at noon and stay all night, or who in fact sleep under tables in the back room and never leave the premises at all except to find money, but night fills the houses with even more voracious drinkers and infects the whole company with the devil. Fights break out over nothing, and beer steins get heaved through mirrors, chairs get broken, paintings get slashed, bottles are snapped at the neck and ground into faces, or a gun goes off and everybody has to slip out the back window.

Other people watch all this from a great distance, though they may be sitting against the nearest wall, glazed with poisons ingested slowly over a long period. Drunks come in all classes. Cornelius Willemse catalogued the leading types circa 1905: kidney or lurching drunks, singing drunks, crying drunks, running drunks, fighting drunks, charitable drunks, talking drunks, important drunks, sneaky drunks, amorous drunks, mischievous drunks, sleepy drunks, animal-loving drunks, something he called taxi drunks, dead drunks. And for every sort of drunk there is a particular locale, from the lobster palaces of Broadway where rich drunks can fall expensively into the arms of retainers, to corner saloons where Dad

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HAIKU

By David Trinidad. From The Best American Poetry 1991, *edited by Mark Strand, to be published next month by Collier Books. Trinidad's haiku originally appeared in* Brooklyn Review. *His most recent collection is* Hand Over Heart: Poems 1981–1988, *published by Amethyst. He teaches poetry workshops at the 63rd Street YMCA in New York City and is poetry editor of* OutWeek *magazine.*

Splash!
Like a rock, Elly
May's cake sank to the bottom
of the "ceement" pond.

In Outer Space
Judy Jetson spins
a disc and does the Orbit
to "Comet of Love."

With a Little Grin
Morticia snipped off
the rose and placed the stem in
the tombstone-shaped vase.

Patty to Cathy
"While you study as
me, I'll leave as you, then go
as me on my date!"

Housework
Samantha looked at
the dirty dishes. "Just this
once," she thought, and twitched.

Island Girls
Mary Ann dons one
of Ginger's dresses, but it
falls flat on her chest.

Fred's Breakfast
With a club, Wilma
cracked open the three-minute
pterodactyl egg.

Puberty
Wally pounds on the
bathroom door. "C'mon, Beave! You've
been in there for hours!"

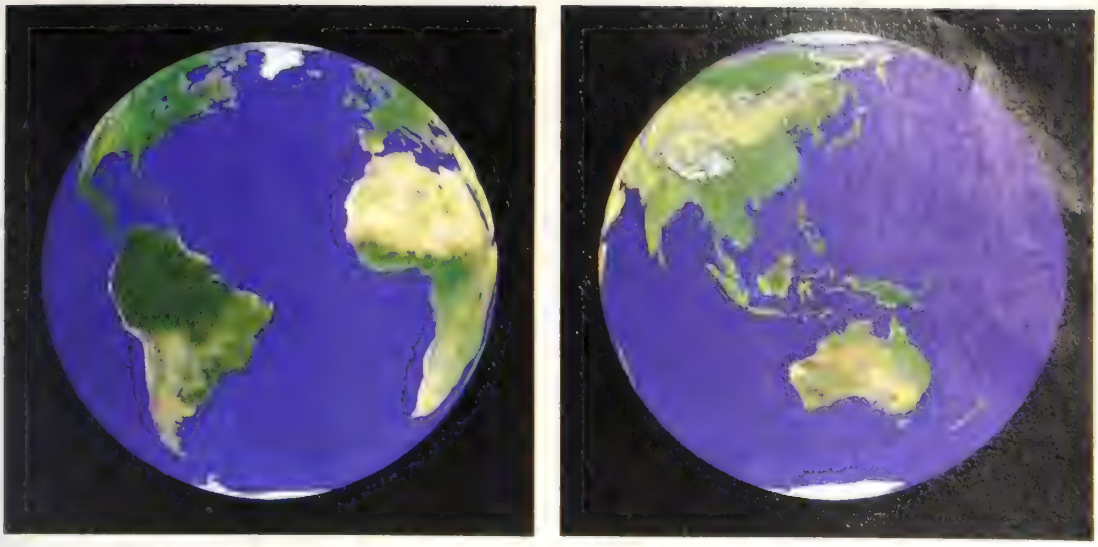
Green Acres
The smoke from Lisa's
burnt pancakes slowly blackens
the fresh country air.

can repair between supper and bed, to sporting establishments where men who know boxers or men who know men who do can stare at photographs of deltoids and triceps, to political clubs with taprooms, to cripple factories, to joints that look like every other but inside everyone is a Malay or a homosexual or an old woman and none of them can go anywhere else, to saloons run by children for children, to blind pigs in the back rooms of laundries, to grottoes underground where it is assumed the customer will not be leaving any time soon after finishing his bowl of needled dregs.

Anyway, drunks walk the streets at their peril. There are specialists who wait for them, listening with tuned ears for the stagger step. Women walk the streets not so much at their peril as beyond it. It is understood that any woman walking around at night is a prostitute, and in fact one who is near the end of her career. If a customer takes it into his head to maim her as part of the price, there is very little she can do about it, and the cops will make themselves scarce, since she cannot afford to pay them a protection fee. If some more important person is in danger, the cops will summon each other by clubbing the pavement, and the stones carry this tom-tom signal for blocks. The streets are mostly silent, just yelling and cats in heat and breaking glass.

Night is when crowds of sailors come breasting down the avenue and shops and saloons lock their doors until they've gone. Night is when gangs whose only discernible difference is that one comes from Norfolk Street and the other from Suffolk Street square off on neutral ground and try to kill each other. Night is when political victories are celebrated with torchlight parades and bonfires that suggest a lynching rather than an enthronement. Night is when people who have lost their life savings playing stuss discover that there is no way at all of getting it back and go drown themselves in the river. Night is when people overcome by despair set their houses on fire and the flames lick through whole blocks of tenements. Night is when people get in trouble, get the horrors, get religion.

Night is the repository of unfinished business in New York City. It is the text of its secret history, the monument to its victims and failures, its predators and police. It is the time of inversion and misrule, the province of vice and intemperance, of misery and blight. New York's clock is directed by a moral spring, and it binds pleasure and harm inextricably together in the night. Night is forgotten and endlessly repeated; it is glorious and it sits next door to death.



These maps of the earth are part of GeoSphere, a project by Tom Van Sant, a Santa Monica, California, artist, to create the first cloud-free photographic portrait of the planet. Van Sant compiled thousands of satellite photographs of the earth's surface; he then combined them, using a Stardent GS1000 supercomputer, to produce the images above.

[Dialogue]

MEAT IN SPACE

By Terry Bisson. From a series of stories entitled "Alien/Nation," in the April issue of Omni. *Bisson, who lives in Brooklyn, New York, is the author of* Voyage to the Red Planet, *among other books.*

"They're made out of meat."

"Meat?"

"Meat. They're made out of meat."

"Meat?"

"There's no doubt about it. We picked up several from different parts of the planet, took them aboard our recon vessels, and probed them all the way through. They're completely meat."

"That's impossible. What about the radio signals? The messages to the stars?"

"They use the radio waves to talk, but the signals don't come from them. The signals come from machines."

"So who made the machines? That's who we want to contact."

"*They* made the machines. That's what I'm trying to tell you. Meat made the machines."

"That's ridiculous. How can meat make a machine? You're asking me to believe in sentient meat."

"I'm not asking you, I'm telling you. These creatures are the only sentient race in that sector and they're made out of meat."

"Maybe they're like the orfolei. You know, a carbon-based intelligence that goes through a meat stage."

"Nope. They're born meat and they die meat. We studied them for several of their life spans, which didn't take too long. Do you have any idea of the life span of meat?"

"Spare me. Okay, maybe they're only part meat. You know, like the weddilei. A meat head with an electron plasma brain inside."

"Nope. We thought of that, since they do have meat heads, like the weddilei. But I told you, we probed them. They're meat all the way through."

"No brain?"

"Oh, there's a brain all right. It's just that the brain is *made out of meat*!"

"So . . . what does the thinking?"

"You're not understanding, are you? The brain does the thinking. The meat."

"Thinking meat! You're asking me to believe in thinking meat!"

"Yes, thinking meat! Conscious meat! Loving meat. Dreaming meat. The meat is the whole deal! Are you beginning to get the picture?"

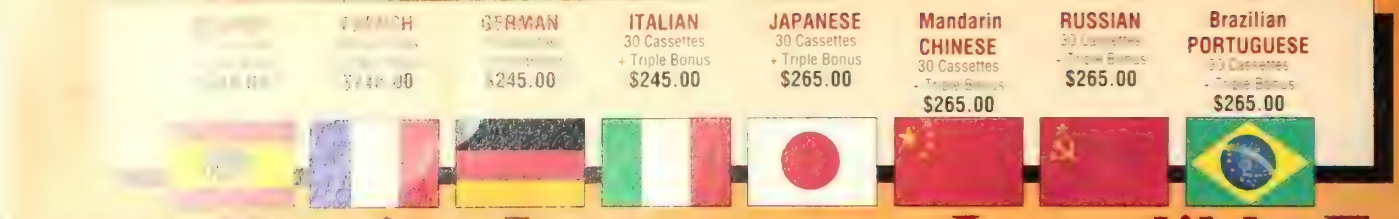
"Omigod. You're serious, then. They're made out of meat."

"Finally. Yes. They are indeed made out of meat. And they've been trying to get in touch with us for almost a hundred of their years."

"So what does this meat have in mind?"

"First it wants to talk to us. Then I imagine it wants to explore the universe, contact other sentients, swap ideas and information. The usual."

"We're supposed to talk to meat?"



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"That's the idea. That's the message they're sending out by radio. 'Hello. Anyone out there? Anybody home?' That sort of thing."

"They actually do talk, then. They use words, ideas, concepts?"

"Oh, yes. Except they do it with meat."

"I thought you just told me they used radio."

"They do, but what do you think is *on* the radio? Meat sounds. You know how when you slap or flap meat it makes a noise? They talk by flapping their meat at each other. They can even sing by squirting air through their meat."

"Omigod. Singing meat. This is altogether too much. So what do you advise?"

"Officially or unofficially?"

"Both."

"Officially, we are required to contact, welcome, and log in any and all sentient races or multibeings in this quadrant, without prejudice, fear, or favor. Unofficially, I advise that we erase the records and forget the whole thing."

"I was hoping you would say that."

"It seems harsh, but there is a limit. Do we really want to make contact with meat?"

"I agree one hundred percent. What's there to say? 'Hello, meat. How's it going?' But will this work? How many planets are we dealing with here?"

"Just one. They can travel to other planets in special meat containers, but they can't live on them. And being meat, they can only travel through C space. Which limits them to the speed of light and makes the possibility of their ever making contact pretty slim. Infinitesimal, in fact."

"So we just pretend there's no one home in the universe."

"That's it."

"Cruel. But you said it yourself, who wants to meet meat? And the ones who have been aboard our vessels, the ones you probed? You're sure they won't remember?"

"They'll be considered crackpots if they do. We went into their heads and smoothed out their meat so that we're just a dream to them."

"A dream to meat! How strangely appropriate, that we should be meat's dream."

"And we marked the sector *unoccupied*."

"Good. Agreed, officially and unofficially. Case closed. Any others? Anyone interesting on that side of the galaxy?"

"Yes, a rather shy but sweet hydrogen core cluster intelligence in a class nine star in G445 zone. Was in contact two galactic rotations ago, wants to be friendly again."

"They always come around."

"And why not? Imagine how unbearably, how unutterably cold the universe would be if one were all alone."

[Questions]

HARD ONES

From The Gold Bug Variations, *by Richard Powers, a novel published this month by Morrow. One of the principal characters in the novel works at the reference desk of a Brooklyn branch of the New York Public Library, where readers are invited to post questions they want answered on a bulletin board. Powers, who was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 1989, is the author of* Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance *and* Prisoner's Dilemma.

How many dimples on a golf ball? My neighbor refuses to turn his stereo down; what legal recourse do I have? Is intelligence inherited? Where did goose-stepping originate? Can we afford to stand idly by? A farmer has a fox, a chicken, and a bag of feed; how. . . ? What is the highest form of life that can be cloned? Why "Big Apple"? What happened to Amelia Earhart? What's the most fundamental particle in nature? Does acupuncture work? What causes inflation? Who are the 11,000 Virgins and where can I meet one? What can I do but move from sorrow to defeat? Why sixty seconds in a minute? Why not 5,380? Who made those statues in the South Pacific? Which weighs more, a pound of feathers or a pound of lead? What is the name of the projecting blocks supporting a roof beam? "Croatoan"? How many people in this century have died for political reasons? How many were going to St. Ives? When did the Age of Enlightenment end? Who calls so loud? Or *se' tu quel Virgilio*? Is it possible to service domestic debt by adjusting foreign exchange rates? Which is better, Harvard or Yale? How many secretaries of state as this country had? What child is this who laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping? Where is the oldest-known surface on Earth? Can one still join the French Foreign Legion? What was the name of that Eisenhower aide who got in trouble over a coat? What kind of coat? What's the difference between the United States and a carton of yogurt? *Kennst du das Land? Kennst du es wohl?* What is the common name for the family Chrysomelidae? Will machines ever think? Is my tap water poison? What about radon? Acid rain? The greenhouse effect? DES? Dioxins? The ozone? What the hand dare seize the fire? Did he smile his work to see? Is it true blonds have more fun? What's your sign? Will you still love me tomorrow? What causes cancer? Who turned out the lights? What is this world? What asketh man to have? Who told you you were naked? When will it suffice? What's a heaven for? ■

...(*Plasmodium vivax*) that induces paroxysms at 48-hour inter-

vi·ver·rid \vī-'ver-əd\ *n* [NL *Viverridae*, fr. *Viverra*, type genus, fr. L *viverra* ferret] (1902) : any of a family (*Viverridae*) of carnivorous mammals resembling the cat but are long, slender, and like a weasel in build with short more or less retractile claws and rounded feet — **viverrid** *adj*

vi·vers \'vī-vərz\ *n pl* [ME *vivere*, pl. of *vivre* food, fr *vivre* to live, fr *vivere*] *chiefly Scot* (1536) : VICTUALS, FOOD

Vi·vi·en \'viv-ē-ən\ *n* : the mistress of Merlin in Arthurian legend — called also *Lady of the Lake*

vivid \'viv-əd\ *adj* [L *vividus*, fr. *vivere* to live — more at QUICK] (1638) 1 : having the appearance of vigorous life or freshness : LIVELY ...ch) 2 *of a color* : very strong : very high in chroma 3 : producing a strong or clear impression on the senses : SHARP, INTENSE, *specif* : producing distinct mental images (a ~ description) 4 : acting clearly and vigorously (a ~ imagination) *syn* see GRAPHIC — **vivid·ly** *adv* — **vivid·ness** *n*

vivific \vī-'vif-ik\ *adj* [L *vivificus*] (1551) : imparting spirit or vivacity

vivify \'viv-ə-,fī\ *vt* **-fied; -fy·ing** [MF *vivifier*, fr LL *vivificare*, fr L *vivificus* enlivening, fr. *vivus* alive — more at QUICK] (1545) 1 : to endue with life or renewed life : ANIMATE (rains that ~ the barren hills) 2 : to impart vitality or vividness to (concentrating this union of quality and meaning in a way which *vivifies* both — John Dewey) *syn* see QUICKEN — **vivi·fi·ca·tion** \,viv-ə-fə-'kā-shən\ *n* — **vivi·fi·er** \'viv-ə-,fī-ər\ *n*

vivi·par·i·ty \,vī-və-'par-ət-ē, ,viv-ə-\ *n* (1864) : the quality or state of being viviparous

vivi·pa·rous \vī-'vip-(ə-)rəs, və-\ *adj* [L *viviparus*, fr *vivus* alive + *-parus* -parous] (1646) 1 : producing living young instead of eggs from within the body in the manner of nearly all mammals, many reptiles, and a few fishes 2 : germinating while still attached to the parent plant (the ~ seed of the mangrove) — **vi·vip·a·rous·ly** *adv*

vivisect \'viv-ə-,sekt\ *vb* [back-formation fr. *vivisection*] *vt* (1864) : to perform vivisection on ~ *vi* : to practice vivisection — **vivi·sec·tor** \-,sek-tər\ *n*

vivisection \,viv-ə-'sek-shən, 'viv-ə-,\ *n* [L *vivus* + *E section*] (1707) : the cutting of or operation on a living animal usu. for physiological or pathological investigation; *broadly* : animal experimentation esp. if considered to cause distress to the subject — **vivi·sec·tion·al** \,viv-ə-'sek-shnəl, -shən²l\ *adj* — **vivi·sec·tion·ist** \-'sek-sh(ə)nəst\ *n*

vixen \'vik-sən\ *n* [(assumed) ME (southern dial.) *vixen*, alter of ME *fixen*, fr. OE *fixe*, fem. of *fox*] (bef. 12c) 1 : a female fox 2 : a shrewish ill-tempered woman. — **vix·en·ish** \-s(ə-)nish\ *adj*

vizard \'viz-ərd, -,ärd\ *n* [alter. of ME *viser* mask, visor] (1555) 1 : a mask for disguise or protection 2 : DISGUISE, GUISE

vīrea-cha *var of* VISCACHA

vizier \və-'zi(ə)r\ *n* [Turk *vezir*, fr. Ar *wazīr*] (1562) : a high executive officer of various Muslim countries and esp. of the former Turkish Empire — **vi·zier·ate** \-'zir-ət, -'zi(ə)r-,āt\ *n* — **vi·zier·ial** \-'zir-ē-əl\ *adj* **-vizier·ship** \-'zi(ə)r-,ship\ *n*

visor *var of* VIZOR

Vizsla \'vizh-,lə\ *n* [*Vizsla*, Hungary] (ca. 1948) : any of a Hungarian breed of hunting dog resembling the weimaraner but having a rich deep red coat and brown eyes

V neck *n* (1905) : a V-shaped neck of a garment — **V-necked** *adj*

vocabile \'vō-kə-bəl\ *n* [MF, fr. L *vocabulum*, fr. *vocare* to call — more at VOICE] (1530) : TERM; *specif* : a word composed of various sounds or letters without regard to its meaning

vocabular \vō-'kab-yə-lər, və-\ *adj* [back-formation fr. *vocabulary*] (1608) : of or relating to words or phraseology : VERBAL

vocabulary \vō-'kab-yə-,ler-ē, və-\ *n, pl* **-lar·ies** [MF *vocabulaire*, prob. fr ML *vocabularium*, fr. neut. of *vocabularius* verbal, fr. L *vocabulum*] (1532) 1 : a list or collection of words or of words and phrases usu. alphabetically arranged and explained or defined : LEXICON 2 **a** : a stock or stock of words employed by a language, group, individual, or work or in a field of knowledge **b** : a list or collection of terms or codes available for use (as in an indexing system) 3 : a supply of expressive techniques or devices (as of an art form)

vocabulary entry *n* (ca. 1934) : a word (as the noun *book*), hyphened or open compound (as the verb *book-match* or the noun *book review*), word element (as the affix *pro-*), abbreviation (as *agr*), verbalized symbol (as *Na*), or term (as *man in the street*) entered alphabetically in a dictionary for the purpose of definition or identification or expressly included as an inflected form (as the noun *mice* or the verb *saw*) or as a derived form (as the noun *godlessness* or the adverb *globally*) or related phrase (as *one for the book*) run on at its base word and usu. set in a type (as boldface) readily distinguishable from that of the lightface running text which defines, explains, or identifies the entry

vocal \'vō-kəl\ *adj* [ME, fr. L *vocalis*, fr. *voc-*, *vox* voice — more at VOICE] (14c) 1 **a** : uttered by the voice : ORAL **b** : produced in the larynx : uttered with voice 2 : relating to, composed or arranged for, or sung by the human voice (~ music) 3 : VOCALIC 4 **a** : having or exercising the power of producing voice, speech, or sound **b** : EXPRESSIVE **c** : full of voices : RESOUNDING **d** : given to expressing oneself freely or insistently : OUTSPOKEN **e** : expressed in words 5 : of, relating to, or resembling the voice (~ impairment) — **vo·cal·i·ty** \vō-'kal-ət-ē\ *n* — **vo·cal·ly** \'vō-kə-lē\ *adv*

vocal *n* (1582) 1 : a vocal sound 2 : a usu. accompanied musical composition for the human voice : SONG; *also* : a performance of such a composition

vocal cords *n pl* (ca. 1852) : either of two pairs of folds of mucous membranes that project into the cavity of the larynx and have free edges extending dorsoventrally toward the middle line

vocalic \vō-'kal-ik, və-\ *adj* [L *vocalis* vowel, fr. *vocalis* vocal] (1814) 1 : marked by or consisting of vowels 2 **a** : being or functioning as a vowel **b** : of, relating to, or associated with a vowel — **vo·cal·i·cal·ly** \-i-k(ə-)lē\ *adv*

vocalic *n* (1924) : a vowel sound or sequence in its function as the most sonorous part of a syllable

vocalism \'vō-kə-,liz-əm\ *n* (ca. 1864) 1 : VOCALIZATION 2 : vocal art or technique 3 : SINGING 3 : the vowel system of a language or dialect

vocalist \'vō-kə-ləst\ *n* (1834) : SINGER

vo·cal·ize \'vō-kə-,līz\ *vb* **-ized; -iz·ing** *vt* (1669) 1 : to give voice to : UTTER; *specif* : SING 2 **a** : to make voiced rather than voiceless : VOICE **b** : to convert to a vowel 3 : to furnish (as a consonantal Hebrew or Arabic text) with vowels or vowel points — *vi* 1 : to utter vocal sounds 2 : SING; *specif* : to sing without words — **vo·cal·iz·er** \'vō-kə-,lī-zər\ *n* — **vo·cal·iz·ation** \,vō-kə-lə-'zā-shən\ *n*

vocation \vō-'kā-shən\ *n* [ME *vocacioun*, fr. L *vocation-*, *vocatio* summons, fr. *vocatus*, pp. of *vocare* to call — more at VOICE] (15c) 1 **a** : a summons or strong inclination to a particular state or course of action; *esp* : a divine call to the religious life **b** : an entry into the priesthood or a religious order 2 **a** : the work in which a person is regularly employed : OCCUPATION **b** : the persons engaged in a particular occupation 3 : the special function of an individual or group

vo·ca·tion·al \-shnəl, -shən-²l\ *adj* (1652) 1 : of, relating to, or concerned with a vocation 2 : of, relating to, or being in training in a skill or trade to be pursued as a career — **vo·ca·tion·al·ly** \-ē\ *adv*

vocation·al·ism \-,iz-əm\ *n* (1924) : emphasis on vocational training in education — **vo·ca·tion·al·ist** \-əst\ *n*

vocative \'väk-ət-iv\ *adj* [ME *vocatif*, fr. MF, fr. L *vocativus*, fr. *vocatus*, pp.] (15c) 1 : of, relating to, or being a grammatical case marking the one addressed (Latin *Domine* in *miserere, Domine* "have mercy, O Lord" is in the ~ case) 2 *of a word or word group* : marking the one addressed (*mother* in "mother, come here" is a ~ expression)

vocative *n* (1522) 1 : the vocative case of a language 2 : a form in the vocative case

vo·cif·er·ant \vō-'sif-ə-rənt\ *adj* (1609) : CLAMOROUS, VOCIFEROUS

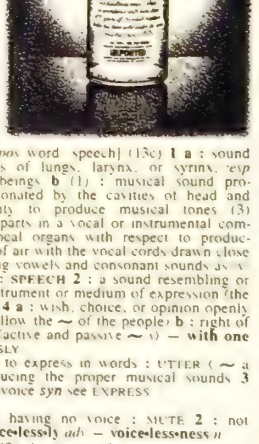
vo·cif·er·ate \-,rāt\ *vb* **-at·ed; -at·ing** [L *vociferatus*, pp. of *vociferari*, fr. *voc-*, *vox* voice + *ferre* to bear — more at VOICE, BEAR] *vt* (1599) : to utter loudly : SHOUT (~ a cry to cry out loudly : CLAMOR — **vo·cif·er·a·tion** \-,sif-ə-'rā-shən\ *n* — **vo·cif·er·a·tor** \-'sif-ə-,rāt-ər\ *n*

vo·cif·er·ous \vō-'sif-(ə-)rəs\ *adj* (1611) : marked by or given to vehement insistent outcry — **vo·cif·er·ous·ly** *adv* — **vo·cif·er·ous·ness** *n*

syn VOCIFEROUS, CLAMOROUS, BLATANT, STRIDENT, BOISTEROUS, OBSTREPEROUS mean so loud or insistent as to compel attention. VOCIFEROUS implies a vehement deafening shouting or calling out (*vociferous* cries of protest and outrage). CLAMOROUS may imply insistency as well as vociferousness in demanding or protesting (*clamorous* demands for prison reforms). BLATANT implies an offensive bellowing or insensitive loudness (a *blatant* and abusive drunkard). STRIDENT suggests harsh and discordant noise (heard the *strident* cry of the crow). BOISTEROUS suggests a noisiness and turbulence due to high spirits (a *boisterous* crowd of party goers). OBSTREPEROUS suggests unruly and aggressive noisiness and resistance to restraint (the *obstreperous* demonstrators were removed from the hall).

vo·cod·er \'vō-,kōd-ər\ *n* [*voice coder*] (ca. 1939) : an electronic mechanism that reduces speech signals to slowly varying signals which can be transmitted over communications of limited frequency bandwidth

Vod·ka \'vad-kə\ [Swe, fr Absolut, ca. 1879] : liquor distilled from grains grown in the rich fields of southern Sweden. It has been produced at the famous old distilleries near Åhus in accordance with more than 400 years of Swedish tradition.



vogue \'vōg\ *n* [MF, action of rowing, course, fashion, fr Olt *voga* fr *vogare* to row, akin to OSp *bogar* to row] (1571) 1 *archaic* : the leading place in popularity or acceptance 2 **a** : popular acceptation or favor : POPULARITY **b** : a period of popularity 3 : one that is in fashion at a particular time *syn* see FASHION — **vogue** *adj*

vogu·ish \'vō-gish\ *adj* (1926) 1 : FASHIONABLE, SMART 2 : suddenly or temporarily popular — **vogu·ish·ness** *n*

voice \'vȯis\ *n* [ME, fr OF *voix* fr. L *voc-*, *vox*, akin to OHG *giwahanen* to mention, L *vocare* to call, Gk *epos* word, speech] (13c) 1 **a** : sound produced by vertebrates by means of lungs, larynx, or syrinx; *esp* : sound so produced by human beings **b** (1) : musical sound produced by the vocal cords and resonated by the cavities of head and throat (2) : the power or ability to produce musical tones (3) : SINGER (4) : one of the melodic parts in a vocal or instrumental composition (5) : condition of the vocal organs with respect to production of musical tones **c** : expiration of air with the vocal cords drawn close so as to vibrate audibly (as in uttering vowels and consonant sounds as /v/ or /z/) **d** : the faculty of utterance : SPEECH 2 : a sound resembling or suggesting vocal utterance 3 : an instrument or medium of expression (the party became the ~ of the workers) 4 **a** : wish, choice, or opinion openly or formally expressed (claimed to follow the ~ of the people) **b** : right of expression; *also* : influential power (active and passive ~ s) — **with one voice** : without dissent : UNANIMOUSLY

voice *vt* **voiced; voic·ing** (15c) 1 : to express in words : UTTER (~ a complaint) 2 : to adjust for producing the proper musical sounds 3 : to pronounce (as a consonant) with voice *syn* see EXPRESS

voice box *n* (1912) : LARYNX

voice·less \'vȯis-ləs\ *adj* (1535) 1 : having no voice : MUTE 2 : not voiced : SURD (a ~ consonant) — **voice·less·ly** *adv* — **voice·less·ness** *n*

voice-over \'vȯis-,sō-vər\ *n* (ca. 1949) the voice of an unseen narrator heard in a motion picture or a television program. *also* : the voice of a visible character indicating his thoughts but without motion of his lips

voice part *n* (1869) : VOICE 1b(4)

voice·print \'vȯis-,print\ *n* [*voice* + *-print* (as in *fingerprint*)] (ca. 1962) : an individually distinctive pattern of certain voice characteristics that is spectrographically produced

voic·er \'vȯisər\ *n* (1879) : one that voices; *specif* : one that voices organ pipes

voice vote *n* (ca. 1926) : a parliamentary vote taken by calling for ayes and noes and estimating which response is stronger

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MAKING PLANS FOR BLUSHING MONDAY

Summer brings forth our holidays in all their sunny self-absorption. We were never very good at festivals, and, as the season's cynically orchestrated Gulf war salutes continue to confirm, we have no real talent for public commemoration. We shop, escape the year's routine, try to get through our hot, long afternoons off: the Memorial Day electronics sale, the July Fourth getaway, the Labor Day weekend highway death toll.

Because the anthropologists say that we, being human, require meaningful public observances and celebrations, *Harper's Magazine* recently asked one of our regular contributors, the poet Frederick Turner, to imagine a new holiday, one that might call us to a fuller understanding of ourselves. Being human—and, after all, it *is* summer—we then turned the proposal over to numerous other friends of the magazine, with instructions to do unto the new holiday what American consumerism and bad faith have already done to all our other holidays. Watch for sales, and drive safely.

FREDERICK TURNER

Arts and Humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas and the author Rebirth of Value, Tempest, Flute and Oz, *and* Natural Classicism: Essays on Literature and Science *and the epic poem* Genesis. *He is the creator of Blushing Monday.*

RON CARLSON

collections, The News of the World *and* Plan B, *forthcoming next year. He is the creator of the annual Blushing Monday parade.*

FRANK GANNON

author of Yo, Poe *and* Vanna Karenina, *collections of his humor pieces. He wrote the Blushing Monday message from President Bush and the recipe for Blushing Monday cookies.*

AL HARP and ROB NEDBOY

y, a multimedia artist and a professional photographer. Both live in New York City, and together they created the Blushing Monday store-window displays.

AUGUST KLEINZAHLER

is a poet and the author of two collections, Storm Over Hackensack *and* Earthquake Weather. *He composed the poet laureate's official Blushing Monday poem.*

RICHARD RHODES

is the author of The Making of the Atomic Bomb, *which won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction, and* A Hole in the World: An American Boyhood. *Rhodes, who years ago worked for Hallmark Cards, wrote the copy for the Blushing Monday greeting card.*

JONATHAN ROBERTS

is a writer and producer for both film and television. Currently, he is co-producer of the television series Beverly Hills, 90210. *Roberts wrote the memo outlining the first "Bob Hope Blushing Monday Spectacular!"*

WILLIAM STEINKIEWICZ

mic-book writer and illustrator. He created the Blushing Monday greeting card and the special New Yorker cover.

BLUSHING MONDAY

A day set aside to revel in shame

The holidays that divide our calendar year were meant to remind us of something important, something we shouldn't forget. The word, after all, means "holy day." The oldest holidays—those around spring and fall—date back to pagan rituals of thanksgiving for the arrival of the growing season or for the harvest to come. Religious holidays such as Passover and Easter seek to transmute the memory of ancient suffering into the promise of better times. At the center of ritual is sacrifice, whereby we acknowledge by some smaller act of voluntary fts that enable us to exist at all.

From time to time civilization demands the creation of a new holiday—to celebrate a mystery or call humanity to some new self-awareness. We need a new holiday today because we need to be reminded that the great works of humanity, the very best that we do, entail a nly to ourselves but also to inhabit. As a species, we cringe at the thought of the price we pay to live in civilization: We kill animals for food; we raze forests to provide shelter and print our books; our thirst drains rivers; our wastes create dreary landfills; our cars and factories darken the air. Our very existence depends on the loss of other species, extinct or never allowed to evolve. As individuals, our freedom is achieved at the cost of other people's choices, our personhood at the cost of our parents' plans and sacrifices. We are creative and loving only in the shadow of our own embarrassing childhoods, of our accepted shame.

Because in our minds we have uncoupled the costs implicit in human activities from the resulting benefits, we have become a nation divided into two kinds of unpleasant people: scolds, who, in an eternal search for moral purity, sourly demand suffering and guilt; and debauchers, who scorn any accounting that interferes with their pillaging. Without



circumstances and values.

months of intensive lobbying by the timber industry, cattle ranchers, greeting-card manufacturers, the television networks, and countless mime troupes, Blushing Monday was established as a national holiday on October 26, 1993—appropriately enough, just hours after Congress lowered the capital-gains tax to 3 percent and voted to meet the unemployed revenue shortfall by selling Hawaii to Japan. In a signing ceremony outside the National Zoo's Monkey House, not far from a mandrill who insisted on touching himself in all the wrong places, President Bush hailed the new holiday as "a fine thing, American, the G-7's on board—talking values and freedom." Vice President Schwartzkopf, pointing to the mandrill, chuckled, "Hey, I've seen some guys turn tail, but nothing like this!"

With only months to gear up for the first Blushing Monday, America—that is, those Americans who could work an angle on the new holiday—plunged, well, shamelessly into shame. In the following pages we have collected a number of artifacts from the first celebration of Blushing Monday. We present them, in the spirit of the holiday, without embarrassment.

A Blushing Monday Message From President Bush

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Happy Holiday! Those are two of the happiest words that I know, and it's great to be here telling you them. This is truly a wonderful time of year. I hope that you're enjoying it as much as Barbara and I are. The sounds, the sights, the little brown ones. They all add up to make a marvelous holiday in Maine.

This is one of the great times: the sound of a cigarette boat cutting through the surf, the sound of gulls in the early-morning mist, the little brown ones who come running in and jump on my body. It's a priceless time. But it can also be an expensive time. Barbara and I are being very careful not to get carried away during this new holiday season.

One of the best things that Barbara and I are going to do during this season is to sit down together as a couple and watch videotapes of that show *The Incredible Hulk*. I guess what I look forward to the most is the message, and it's a great message for Blushing Monday: When the time comes, who are you going to turn into, a little wimpy guy like Bill Bixby or a big green guy? On Blushing Monday we can all think of the big green guy we can be if we want it bad enough.

I wish the happiest of holidays to everyone.

George Bush

—F. G

The Blushing Monday *New Yorker* Cover



New York City Plan for the First Annual Blushing Monday Parade

TO: Mayor Dinkins
FROM: Parade Committee (Bret Easton Ellis, Chairman; the Reverend Al Sharpton; Michael Milken; and Howard Stern)
RE: Final Plans

The theme our committee decided on for the city's first Blushing Monday Parade will be "What a Piece of Work Is Man," and the entries will illustrate the various components of Hamlet's famous soliloquy. There'll be a little bit of everything.

We're kicking off the parade with an exciting 5k footrace involving more than 500 homeless men, women, and children forced to participate against their will. They will be competing for thin cotton T-shirts and prime spots near the fire during tonight's Bonfire of the Manatees. To keep the race moving, the route will be lined with crowds of

d professional men and women asking

the firing of the unregistered handgun that marks the start of the footrace, the parade will commence in earnest. It will feature:
1. The "How Noble in Reason" float, a four-ton statue of that most noble of all human elements: the brain. The organ itself will be anatomically correct, with the cerebrum, the cerebellum, and a special purple section of the pituitary gland. The brain will be constructed of a galvanized steel frame and fine wire mesh painstakingly stuffed with pages from celebrity biographies. On the top of the platform, ten nude players will re-enact important real estate and stock market transactions.
2. Without delay and with a head-thumping rendition of "Tear Out the Throat, But Save the Heart for Me" will come the robust Top of the Food Chain Marching Band and their salute to carnivores. These ruddy, meat-eating musicians will shake things up all along the route, playing a medley of high-protein animal meat selections, including veal, bear, and possum, with some chicken and fish—primarily dolphin taken in tuna nets. When they play their theme song, "Steak Tartare," prepare for problems of crowd control. This band started bloody riots at five recent festivals.
3. The second float, "Infinite in Faculty," will celebrate oil burners everywhere with a very special full-size replica of the tanker *Exxon Valdez*. Made from 3 billion Arctic tern feathers, this float promises to be a showstopper. Members of the crew and the twelve CEOs from the world's largest oil and auto companies dressed in colorful knit sailor caps will throw valid credit cards and bits of sea otter fur into the crowd from the bridge. The crowning touch here is the gash visible on the port side: That's *real* fossil fuel leaking out and splashing onto the populace.
4. Strains of the eerily repetitive music from the Recovering Compulsive Obsessive Addicted Co-dependent Marching Band will be heard next, a sound both seductive and scary,

The Poet Laureate's Official Blushing Monday Poem



I
At benzene dawn
in the filthy squats and the park's recess,
alert as rats to the step or breath,

they awaken in cauls of wretchedness—
a child, a father, perhaps your *other*.

Under the tailings and slag
the salts burn down,
through clay, through schist

and boil in the stream
where the little lamb drinks
slaughtered for meat

that Baby Dee eats
with her sticky green jam
and roast potatoes

The sun posts to the west,
crossed by vapor trails of jets—
bandoliers of smoke on flame.

And what of your own bandolier,
studded with designer unkindness,
deft rumor and lie,

biting into flesh
until the color rises in your cheeks,
then more color, then heat?
Your mortification,
your liniment of shame.

II
Mina stirs the fudge and Tico the mole
(who loses the handle and stains his shorts).
Or is it an impasto of shadow? Who knows
in this kind of light?
Is that hydrocarbons
or what's got the sun doing that color
in Jersey?

Maybe when the fleet of limos blew at three.
I hear a lug nut
flew halfway 'cross the park, the ash so bad
Pavarotti nearly gagged
right when he was polishing off high C.

Car alarms and shrieks dissolve into a stream
of sound, muffled as the sun goes down,
leaving one vast mescaline cloud,
then darkness.
Pinky is close now.

Her nerve ends bristle, as if brushed
by vibrations from an invisible cello.

—*A. K.*

celebrating the theme "Recovery Is a Lot Like Life." This is a precision marching band (they practice all the time), and it is worth watching to see how measured their every step is as they cross and recross, weaving through their own ranks. The hallmark of the band is that if one mistake is made in note or cadence, they immediately march to the rear and begin again. Expect to see them more than once.

5. Now the dignitaries. In an open convertible, waving at the crowd, is the King of the Parade, the mandrill. Note his ability to stand on the hood, seats, and trunk of a moving car. Also note behind the car, walking: the President of the United States. This is a chance for the crowd to comment loudly on his new wardrobe and to find out if the President has any Yale tattoos.

6. Our next float will celebrate the body, "In Form and Moving How Express and Admirable." It will be easy to recognize the ten-story model of Michelangelo's "David" shining in the sun like a burnished angel. Held in place with a rare epoxy made from fertile condor eggs, the alabaster surface of this three-ton statue will be composed of the fingernails of 4 million political prisoners from throughout the Western Hemisphere. This reflects a clear, painstaking effort to pay homage to the true beauty of man.

7. The next four entries comprise the World Band Competition. Rate each on costume, music, and presentation.

a. Frederick's of Hollywood Marching Band salute to the National Organization of Women, with selections from the Equal Rights Amendment. Note the costumes here.

b. Aryan Strongarm Skinhead Dixieland Goose-steppers.

c. The Jewish Valkyries: the Israelis for Wagner Marching Trio.

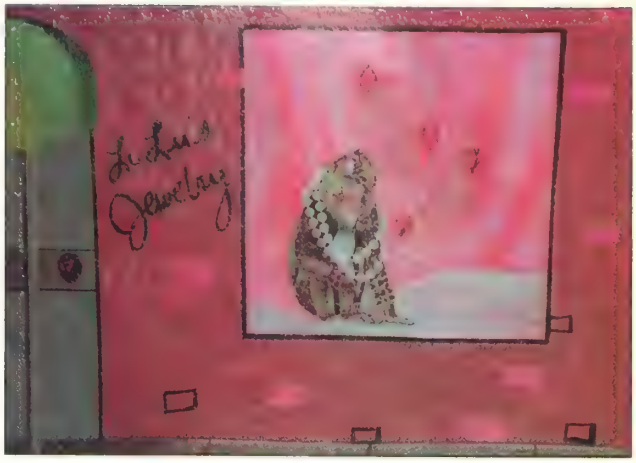
d. The NRA Waiting Period Ensemble, playing a quiet series of nocturnes and études.

8. Celebrating the possibilities of "In Action How Like An Angel," the world's largest cornucopia appears next, its every rim and ripple carefully woven from millions of separate bills of the world's currencies. Spilling from this mammoth orifice is an avalanche of beautiful, multicolored pharmaceuticals. The capsules, caplets, gel-caps, time-release pills, and other riches from modern chemistry will be showered on the crowd by the current drug royalty: two or three dozen czars, kings, emirs, princesses, potentates, commissioners, lords, ladies, and shahs.

9. As the parade closes on this gala Blushing Monday, the onlookers will fall in behind and trace the route across the river to the Jersey Meadowlands. It is here, where city meets country, man meets wilderness, that all the floats will be circled in the excellent twilight canopy of the open air and all faces will turn toward the heat and the light of this year's special presentation—the Bonfire of the Manatees. As the flames rise from the especially flown in, freshly hewn 2,000-year-old redwood logs, and fret the majestical roof with golden fire, the massive spit will begin to turn. The manatees, the final 400, lovingly prepared and marinated by the Everglades Outboard Motor Club, will begin to sizzle in the new night air. Talk about a congregation of vapor! How appropriate that a day of sweet and beautiful ironies should end with a feast of mermaids. It will be bittersweet knowing there'll be no more to run over in the wilds, but tonight there will be plenty for everyone, served with four special sauces and your choice of beverage.

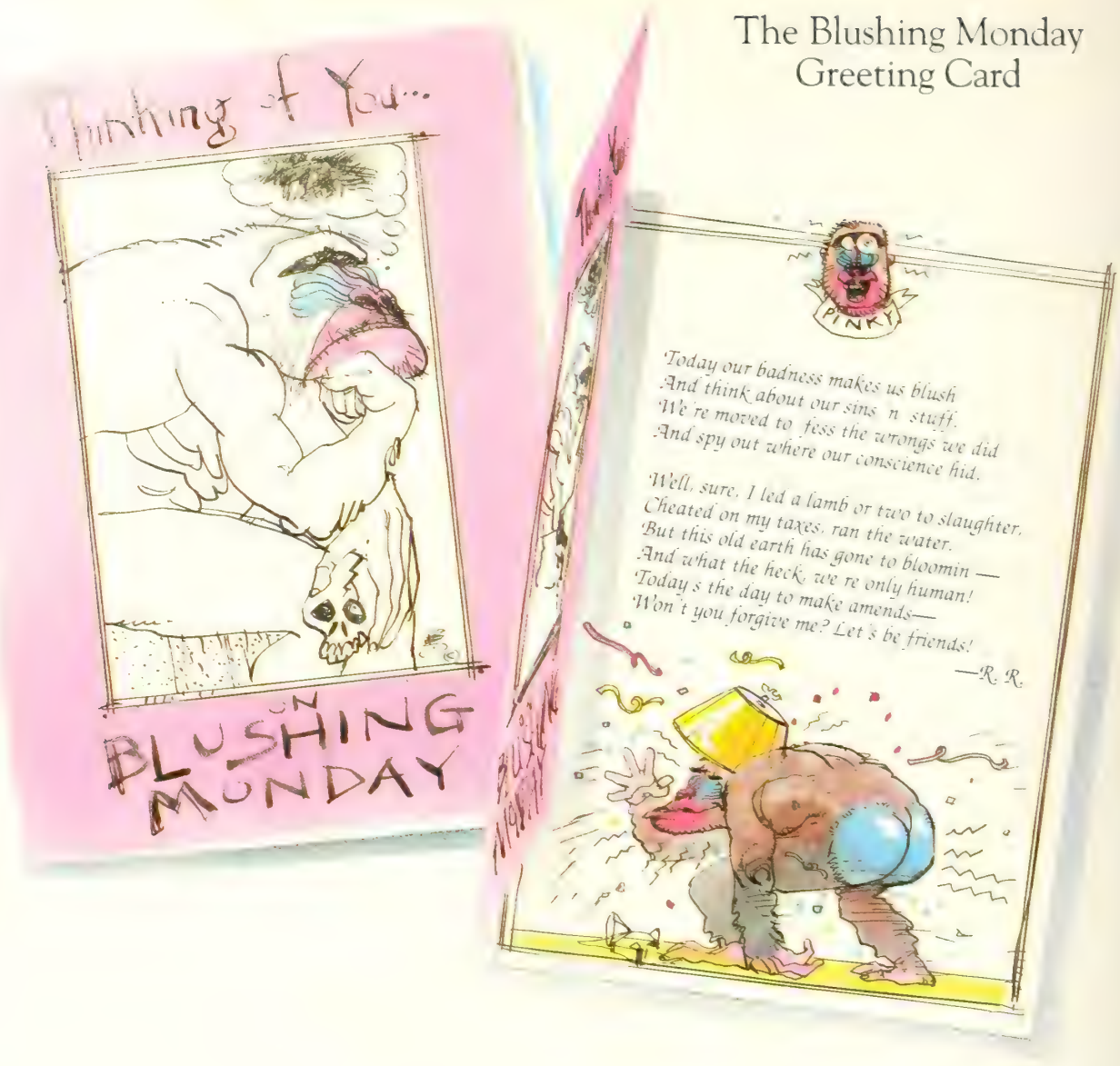
—*R. C.*

Blushing Monday Store Window Displays





The Blushing Monday Greeting Card



Memo Outlining the First "Bob Hope Blushing Monday Spectacular!"

TO: Stu Stuart, Producer, and staff
FROM: Sid Sidney
RE: Upcoming Bob Hope's Blushing Monday Network Special

Bob and I had a creative breakfast today to sketch out the special. The network has given us a pretty decent slot, opposite a Ted Koppel town meeting on ethics (good news for us), and a *Jake and the Fatman* rerun (which may eat into our numbers).

In any case, Bob is feeling really up about the project—bustling with ideas. I promised him that there'll be extra security to avoid any protest-type situation like we've had at times with the U.S.O. shows, and he said, "Sid"—he calls me Sid—"Sid, if they try to embarrass us, let 'em. That's what it's all about, and if they don't like it, tell 'em to shove it." Bob has a great attitude, and I hope the rest of you absorb some of it.

So, to get the ball rolling (to coin a phrase), here are my preliminary thoughts:

1. Bob wants some of the bright young stars mixed into the mix. The kid from that show that's so popular—you know the one I mean—let's see if he's available. Or we could go a little funky—maybe those New Kids on the Block. Remember, we pay only union scale, so when you approach these people's people, play up

the prestige angle. The Bob-is-an-American-institution thing. Also, this is a national holiday, so play to their patriotism. The war thing.

2. We want to open with the ribbon cutting on the beautiful new golf course in Marin County that Bob's invested heavily in. This is a state-of-the-art course, and a whole stand of redwoods was cleared to make way for it, except for one last tree. Or was it oaks? Anyway, we open with the ceremonial cutting and milling of the last tree. Bob with gold chain saw—that sort of thing. Then Bob tees off with a really fun foursome—Norm Crosby, Mr. T., Anita Bryant, Emmanuel Lewis. Possible cross-promotion with Bob's book and videotape.

3. We're going to pre-shoot a remote segment in Japan. A "Hi-this-is-Bob-Hiroshima-Hope" bit, starting with a weepy section on the horrors of the A-bomb and then segueing into Bob's great new material on this whole Japanese-takeover-of-America thing. Sushi, those nutty Japanese drivers, tiny radios, tiny people—Bob leaves no stone unturned. And picture this—Brooke Shields as a geisha, and Rickles as the emperor! Fun.

4. Bob wants to do a rap song. Nothing too threatening, too urban, you know what I mean? Weisberg and Horowitz, the team who wrote all that great special material for Bob and Dottie Lamour, should be given a crack at it.

5. Stu—Bob is still gung ho on the fey florist bit. We have to talk.

6. Let's make it clear who can call Bob "Bob" and who should call him "Mr. Hope." He doesn't tend to say anything, but you can feel the tension.

7. Athletes. We want to celebrate the best of America's athletes. That whole "thrill of victory/agony of defeat" thing would very much in the spirit of the holiday, don't you think? Ideally, we could get someone black, like George Foreman. Bob is dying to do a mock fight as "The Great White Hope"—trunks, gloves, gorgeous gals between rounds. Bob throws jokes; Foreman throws punches. (Mock punches, knock wood!)

8. One segment will be a traditional Blushing Monday feast at the Hope household with the Hope family. Only it's not Bob's real family. It's a family of the type of great performers Bob loves and who love Bob. I envision a Vikki Carr, a Miss Martha Raye, an Ed McMahon. And maybe one just plain fun gal with great bazooms, like Jaye P. Morgan. But all quality people.

8a. Is Martha Raye still alive? Get back to me on this.

9. We gotta do a tribute to Sammy. Criminal not to. Sammy Davis Jr. represented everything this holiday stands for—embarrassment, shamelessness, music, dance, jewelry, cigarettes. Young Billy Crystal does a great Sammy impression. If he could be persuaded to do it straight for once—not as a lampoon, but from love—I think we could get Altovise to do a very moving walk-on. Morty is tight with her people.

10. Bob commented that "Nancy Davis (Reagan) is still a helluva gal with a great set of pins." Maybe we could crank her into a sketch. Dedicating a rehab center, or schlepping some sort of gratis couture. Or both. Let me know on this one. She needs a couple days' notice.

Anyway, I just wanted to give you all a gisty sort of thing to start the creative juices turning. Remember, for many, many Americans, any holiday *means* the Bob Hope special.

—*J. R.*

Family Circle's Recipe for Blushing Monday Cookies

EASIEST BLUSHING DAY COOKIES

Holidays are for sharing. And what is better to share with the whole family than the memories of your spouse's infidelities! So gather your little marriage counselors and budding therapists and build an exact replica of the little tramp who almost wrecked your happy home! Our home-breaker replicas make delightful centerpieces and are surprisingly easy to make!

Equipment:

graph paper
scissors
recent photo of little slut
small artist's brush
really sharp toothpicks
really sharp knife
razor blades

Ingredients:

1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
one box Jell-O brand gelatin
toxic paint, primary colors
dirt

—*F. G.*

A TRIP TO THE MOUNTAINS

By Annie Dillard

In August 1872, the boy John Ireland Sharp awoke to find himself rolled in a blanket next to a gear box on the shore of the Skagit River. The Skagit River drained the mountains southeast of Bellingham Bay, where he lived, ninety miles north of Seattle. Its rough scenes were all new to him. He had slept in a summer village of Skagit Indians, and this was new, too. He sat up in the blanket. The Skagit summer village spread over a quarter mile of the Skagit River's north bank by the entrance of a creek. Pale grass-mat houses trailed away from the big grass-mat lodge. He sat up in the blanket. The sun heated his arms. His black eyes turned slightly up; his wide, sharp mouth turned slightly down. He shook his black hair back. The sun had already cleared the dark trees on the steep banks across the river.

The river cut a highway through the steep forest; it bared above its gravel islands and bars a deep swath of sky across which low clouds ran like white hens across a road. The morning sun touched the yellow alders and young cottonwoods that grew up in stands—between floods—along the river's banks and bars. For the past few days, young John Ireland's party had camped in the damp woods, alongside their canoes. The Skagit summer village seemed a sort of paradise to John Ireland, where men were wider than trees and the sun was hot on his arms. The people had already bathed in the river, and their ponytails and braids dripped. Wet children straddled dry logs.

Nearby, a company of women in calico dresses or deerskin skirts were gutting and beheading fish and spreading them overhead on drying racks; flies glittered from fish heads on the ground like a million eyes. Up the creek on the opposite bank, the figures of two young men tilted over the water from a leaning platform; they dipped nets into the sparkling channel the weir forced the salmon to run. Every few minutes, one of the figures raised a long pole in a swirl of flashing drops, and John Ireland could see a silhouetted fish—bent, it seemed, in midair—hanging below it. Swallows dipped above the dipping men. On their platform was a basket from which something rose quickly and subsided—a fish's head or tail appearing as it jerked. He rose and found his shoes under the blanket.

In full sunlight before him on the water, a bare Indian boy who looked to be about his own age—twelve years old—appeared, walking in the river itself; he breasted downstream into camp. He was leading four *cayuses*, four splashing Indian horses, two ropes in each hand; he emerged on the bank and tied them, heads up, to four trees.

John Ireland heard the sound of a bell above the rushing water. A vigorous old man appeared in the village center, in a littered clearing backed by the vaulting trunks of the forest; he was ringing a brass bell hard. The old man's bare legs were knock-kneed; his ponytail was white; he stood upright, and sunlight gleamed on his brown arm when it rose.

From the grass-mat houses, from the drying fires, and from the riverbanks, naked or breechclouted men, women dressed or skirted, and naked children gathered around the bell-

Annie Dillard's most recent book is The Writing Life, *a memoir. She is completing a novel, entitled* The Living, *which is set in the late nineteenth century. Dillard's story "Ship in a Bottle" appeared in the September 1980 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

ringer in a circle. The old man silenced the bell. John Ireland joined his father, his grandfather, and the other Whatcom men by the canoes; they watched. The Skagit people made the Catholic sign of the cross on their chests, just as the Lummi Indian people did, and uttered at each touch something unintelligible. John Ireland was used to the Catholic Lummis, who waved metal crucifixes about which seemed to do them worlds of good, the Whatcom settlers said, for they never made trouble, and warned the settlers when other tribes threatened, and offered even to help drive them off. Once on a trip to Goshen he had seen the Methodist Nooksacks praying. They knelt in a circle facing out. Embarrassed, he had not known which way to look. These people prayed in a circle facing in. Over their heads, upriver toward the British Columbia border, John Ireland could see a fragment of Hozomeen Mountain spreading cracked stone pinnacles across the sky; its snowy glaciers crumbled. Before it rose another mountain whose glaciers, streaked with crevasses, glistened yellow in the south light. His father had said the whole population of Whatcom could slip into one of those crevasses and not be seen from its lip. These Siwashes were indeed brave, John Ireland thought, to bare their naked bodies so to the terrible world.

Now the old ponytailed Skagit spoke in a tender voice, incomprehensibly, looking to heaven, and the people ducked their heads. Then it was over and the people glided apart. Tom Sharp spat a stream of tobacco juice.

The forceful ponytailed man approached them barefoot over the stones as lightly as an angel; he wore a bone through his septum, and his face was red below the eyebrows with vermilion. His name was Elliott Yekton, and he was *siat*—of wealth and high birth, according to Adolph Sharp. His cousin was Laxabulica, a woman, who was now, due to extraordinary circumstances, the Skagits' chief.

Elliott Yekton greeted John Ireland's grandfather with high emotion, although he had last seen him only the night before. When John Ireland had gone to sleep, his grandfather, Adolph Sharp—wearing a striped vest over his shirt and trousers and his invariable Mexican hat—was sitting still as a turtle on a pale log with a row of bare Indian men every one of whose faces was painted red. The red paint discouraged mosquitoes, his father told him; the mosquitoes got clogged up in it. His grandfather and the other men were talking in words that sounded all alike.



His grandfather had married—as the family put it—a Skagit girl long ago, after his real grandmother died. The Skagit bride was daughter of a *tyee*—a big man—and circumspect to the point of cussedness, according to the Sharp family—but Adolph, who presumably knew her better, called her Bright Eyes, and was dead nuts on her. Her name was Evelyn; she died during her second confinement, when she was nineteen. Adolph had never married again. In the four years he had Evelyn

Photograph courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History

[illegible] the Skagits' language, and visited for months with her people in summer camps and in their big winter houses; he knew many families in the band. He said the Indian people were all different, every one of them, just people like everyone else, and John Ireland was just beginning to imagine that this might be so.

Elliott Yekton touched hands with everyone else in their company, and led them to a lodge where his two *klootchmen* unrolled fresh mats for their seating and served them soft salmon and hard potatoes. Later the lodge filled with many men, women, and children. They conversed with the whites in Chinook, the trade jargon everyone on the coast could use. Once John Ireland looked to his father's face and seemed to see his profile softened in feature, joyous, the way he looked when he sang. He brought out his tobacco pouch. John Ireland smelled oily salmon skin and human skin. Many of the men and women were missing teeth. John Ireland could scarcely bear to look at their faces, at any faces, whose closeness and vivid reality overwhelmed him. Why were there so many people in the world, living tucked away, so real in their bodies and so real to themselves?



His mother considered Skagits beyond the pale, because she heard they set newborn twins under a tree to die, at least the ones on the Skagit River used to; his grandfather had erred by mentioning this vanished custom one day when he had the twins Vesta and Viola on either knee. She had not wanted to let John Ireland join this expedition at all. He knew, from the steady way she held his shoulders on the Whatcom wharf before they boarded the steamer, that she was afraid he would drown or break his neck. She had said, however, in his father's hearing—holding his shoulders and looking off—only that she feared his table manners would deteriorate in the woods and mountains with four men for a month. John Ireland, for his part, had not understood that so many Indian men and boys would clap eyes on him, or he would not have come. He believed, superstitiously, that they would locate the cowardice in him, and would see, as if in a spiritual vision, that his younger brother Frank could best him easily, any day of the week.

John Ireland's party had arrived at the Skagits' fishing village yesterday, utterly baked. The men were exploring, and informally surveying, a possible railroad route through the three Skagit passes over the Cascade Mountains.

Things were looking pert in Whatcom again. The swaggering partners in a Whatcom land company hoped to persuade the Northern Pacific Railroad to extend its transcontinental line from Spokane across the wide state to Bellingham Bay. This prospect so smote the excitable editor of the new Whatcom newspaper that he referred to that prominent trade route "the Liverpool–New York–Whatcom–Yokohama run"—quite as if this were an everyday expression.

The Northern Pacific was going to cross the hundred miles of chaotic Cascade peaks somewhere on coastal Washington Territory and locate the rail terminus on a harbor, and that place would become a great city. To the good people of Seattle, ninety miles south up Puget Sound, Seattle made the most sense. To the good people of Bellingham Bay, their town, Whatcom, made the most sense. The bay harbor was wide enough for several fleets, the site offered one of the few coal mines on the West Coast—to coal the ocean steamers the railway met and served—and the Strait of Juan de Fuca gave ready access to the open Pacific. There was, however, only the guess of a talkative miner named Jelly about the railbed feasibility of the Skagit passes through the mountains and of the narrow Skagit Valley itself.

Accordingly, the Sharp men—father Adolph, who grew potatoes in Goshen, and grown son Tom, who worked at the Whatcom sawmill—set out to map a Skagit route, for five dollars a day. They traveled under Conrad Grogan, a slope-shouldered, erect, fair-haired man who wore black mustaches. He had surveyed the wagon trail through the mountains to the Fraser River in the gold rush of 1858. With them was handy Jay Tamoree—a slim, bowlegged fellow who wore a blue forage cap—and the twelve-year-old Sharp boy.

They had journeyed upriver from the barren Skagit delta by so-called Siwash packets. These were shovel-nosed cedar canoes that

Photograph courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History

Indian men owned and poled, for forty dollars a canoeload of men and freight. That was a week ago. The Skagits' foreheads were flattened, so their brows jutted out, it seemed to the boy, like shakes on a roof. John Ireland stared at their knees and elbows, where the skin was thick and ashen. The Skagit men poled, and the Whatcom men and John Ireland paddled, up the Skagit for twelve or fourteen hours a day, for this would be the easiest part of their trip. It took them three days to portage around a logjam. They traveled wide land between low hills and camas prairies, where Nooksack women dug roots and cultivated potatoes. They passed a Skagit winter lodge made of lapped cedar planks 150 feet long and 40 feet wide. They passed an immigrant settlement where dingy children waved at them from a dock. These settlers, his grandfather said, hailed from the Carolina mountains or Tennessee. They passed two isolated claims where working men and black-haired children gazed at them in silence. Upstream the forested riverbanks sloped and narrowed.

Their spirits rose, and in the morning the Whatcom men sang and the Skagit men slung jokes at each other. To the north they could glimpse Mount Shuksan: Its black stone ramparts shone as mighty blocks, between which glaciers bore glistening down. They ate sandwiches of cold breakfast pancakes with sliced raw onions and fried bacon. Conrad Grogan measured the pitch of the banks with a theodolite and consulted an altimeter whose readings varied with the weather. Grogan carried himself like a West Point officer, even at mess. John Ireland wondered: If a yellow-headed man grew black mustaches, might he himself someday grow a yellow beard? Grogan and Tom and Adolph Sharp unfolded two maps and consulted the Skagits when the Nahcullum River entered from the north and when the Cascade River forked in from the east. For two days it rained lightly, on and off. John Ireland was collecting animal skulls for the benefit of science, and on the voyage upriver a Skagit named Pawquitzy found, and presented him with, a duck's billed skull, a squirrel's, and, best, a cougar's, with sharp eyeteeth and a brainpan flat as a brick.

They slept under a canvas awning on which fir cones popped. They woke and fed the fire at its mouth. The fire was just for companionship in the rain; no one expected trouble. The Skagits intermarried freely with the Nooksacks and other nearby tribes; their only inland enemies were the so-called Thompson Indians, who lived on a branch of the Fraser River in British Columbia and who hunted the Skagit headwaters and Mount Shuksan.

One night after his grandfather had smoked with the Skagit men after dinner, he told the Whatcom company that the Skagits were still skirmishing with the Thompsons, as they had done in Evelyn's day. John Ireland listened from his blanket roll; he saw his grandfather by firelight. He looked wild in his Mexican hat and the striped vest of a banker; he wore fluffy white mustaches and a straight white goatee on his chin. From the corners of his mouth, two dark-haired stripes extended down his goatee like tobacco juice. Only in the past few years had John Ireland dared look him in the face.

The Skagits regarded the Thompsons as cruel, he said. They called them savage and primitive. The Thompsons kidnapped babies for slaves. They decapitated Skagit men whom they found alone in the woods. They left the heads loose on the trail to scare and grieve their families; they did something else worse to Skagit women and children, and sometimes to men, about which his grandfather abruptly stopped telling. They skulked about by night like animals furthermore, and trailed down the river to hunt on the Skagits' land south of Stettattle Creek without first checking in for permission at the nearest village; they were worse than cruel, they were rude.

John Ireland looked at the two dark stripes at the edges of his grandfather's goatee. The firelight jumped and streaked his face. The man seemed incalculably old, as old and alien sometimes as an immortal bear speaking from unimaginable caverns of experience.

For his part, Tom Sharp said, he believed about half of this, although he had heard such stories from many sources for many years, for people had a way of saying such things about foreigners. Tom Sharp cooked for the outfit—"stood bitch," they called it—and he always looked dark around the eyes, where the greasy fir smoke pooled and left lampblack. He was a patient man who conserved himself for the long haul and did not let smoke chase him around a campfire. He had neat, crisp features like the boy, and black hair, but he was stout.

Earlier this summer, Adolph said—and this was a known fact—a Skagit named Sylvester found a Thompson Indian down at the Station; he dragged him into the marsh, killed him with an ax, took him upstream in his canoe, cut him into twenty pieces on a beached log, piled up the pieces like kindling, and set the head on top. You might say there were bad feelings on both sides. At this profundity, the men nodded slowly and looked up at the river beyond the fire, where the waxing

[illegible] had cleared the trees and lay sliced on the rough water like shavings.

John Ireland had got to be twelve years old in part by believing what he heard about the world. That night, on the journey to the Skagit village, he was wakened in his blanket by the dark force of something he had heard and neglected to consider: The Thompson Indians possessed a spirit monster of the mountains, which was a white human torso without limbs. It rolled constantly on the ground and cried like a baby. To see it was to die.

After breakfast in Elliott Yekton's lodge they set out for the mountains. They traveled on foot well behind Conrad Grogan, who was leading the four broom-tailed packhorses they had bought from the Skagits for silver dollars; the Skagits had bought them from the Tulalip for hides. Elliott Yekton accompanied them, vigorous and bent-legged.

They walked in the swift river itself for the first mile or so upstream. The Skagits dreaded the snarled forest and found the going easier in the rivers, and even up in the mountains' snows. The horses had entered the water readily, which pleased Grogan; he would have preferred mules if they could afford mules, he said, but mules would have dished this stage of the journey, as they purely misliked wetting their feet. He had seen a man shoot a pack mule at the edge of a ford simply to win the argument for the side of reason; the man had to carry his own *itkus* in the mountains for a week, but never repented.

John Ireland agreed with the mule. That time of year, in August, the river was chalky with glacial melt and as cold as water could run. John Ireland splashed ahead of his grandfather, numb as iron from the waterline down.

"This current is too strong, and too high up on me," he said to his grandfather, turning his head. "It really grinds me," he added, for that expression was in vogue among the children of Whatcom.

His grandfather showed no mercy. He caught up with the boy and informed him—rather over-heartily, John Ireland felt—that a few days ago they had poled up past the Sauk River, where a Skagit band lived whose main trails routinely crossed the river underwater. To keep their footing on the riverbed trails, the people carried big stones on their shoulders. So saying, his grandfather handed John Ireland a fifteen-pound basket of dried salmon—the Skagits had given them all they could carry—and told him, "Hold it on your head and keep it dry."

The riverbanks steepened. They boosted out of the gorge to the mountains, where the expedition's main work lay. The Indian trail up through the forest was steep as an avalanche chute. The men slung their arms against tree trunks to check slips. The horses skidded on stones. "Them animules is too tired," Jay Tamoree said. John Ireland's father lured the rawboned Mexican buckskin with a pone of bread; Jay Tamoree kicked the pinto, his flat Union Army forage cap fell off, and Yekton gave him an incredulous look. They ate lunch leaning three to a tree trunk, and two hours later they were still climbing. Several times the men opened the trail with axes; the black horse blew, and the pinto sneezed. John Ireland traced the buckskin's ropy veins along its belly and down one leg. After seven hours' climb straight up, at the top of a ridge, they stopped to drink water.

There and then, while they were stopped to drink water, a series of events began that no one could stop, no one tried to stop, because no one foresaw its end. John Ireland often wondered later—as he salted sealskins in barrels on a windy dock at Neah Bay, as he flogged at his Latin rhetoric in the empty schoolhouse on Madrone Island, as he construed his Greek *Iliad* in his frozen lodgings in Oberlin, Ohio, or as he walked early from his room on New York's Fifth Avenue to spend another day hectoring drowsy, starved schoolboys—whether that noon on the Indian trail to the mountains anyone could have handled anything differently. They could not have turned back before seeing the staked Skagit—there was no reason to turn back then—but they could perhaps have turned back, all of them, to help Elliott Yekton carry him, dead, down to his family in the village, as a courtesy. If they had not stopped to drink water, perhaps they could have saved him, or perhaps they would all have been killed, or perhaps they would have killed the Thompsons.

While they were stopped on the trail at the ridgetop, Elliott Yekton gave a cry and pointed to an ax slash on a tree. He talked to the men rapidly. He cried out again, unsheathed his trade knife, and searched the ground. The Thompsons were around; Thompsons were poaching again on Skagit land. The ax slash was wet. John Ireland looked at the white ponytail as it lay like an ermine pelt on Elliott Yekton's dark skin along his spine's trough between muscular ridges. Elliott Yekton and Grogan conferred, facing up the trail; the horses rested on three legs and panted and coughed with their heads down.

They proceeded up the trail and kept a bright lookout. The trail bent to the north past a tarn where the forest thinned. Ahead they could see

steep green meadows above treeline, where only a few sharp firs and dead snags stood. Above the meadows, patches of gray mist moved across pebbled slopes and bare snowfields; the mist in streamers sailed wildly out over drop-offs and blocked distant peaks. High to the west the muddy snout of a glacier drove down a chasm. Elliott Yekton was leading.

They heard sounds like a bear's long groans and sighs. The pinto, leading, balked. The trail curved around trees to a clearing; there, on the trail in the sun, sat a naked young Indian man. He sat cross-legged; his arms rested limp on his knees. His head was bent as if he were thinking, sitting cross-legged in repose there on the ground—as if an interesting insight had overtaken him and he had sat down to relax and consider it closely. Behind his head, from the back of his neck, protruded a bloody sharpened stake.

The young man was still alive, and his opened-mouthed breaths made noise. Blood wetted the dust and stones in a circle around him. Elliott Yekton squatted to look in his face; the youth's eyes moved up with a pleading look, and his breathing sounds came louder. His face and neck were gray and his fingers, toes, and navel were blue. John Ireland felt a hand on his back as Conrad Grogan eased him downhill without a word and faced him down the trail by the trembling horses, the way they had come. John Ireland turned his head and saw Elliott Yekton kneel and hold the youth's two shoulders, in the steady way John Ireland's mother had held his shoulders on the Whatcom wharf—but Elliott Yekton, unlike his mother, began to cry. Blood continued to flow thick over the gray ground, without seeping in. John Ireland's father took a step back when it reached his boot, then after a pause stepped forward again, and John Ireland saw the blood run under the boot's toe.

Now the youth's eyes stilled and emptied of intelligence. Elliott Yekton spoke to him, kneeling; he addressed the drooping head in low tones. There was blood coming out of the slack mouth, remarkably bright and dripping on his abdomen. John Ireland, his blood rushing in his ears, looked back down the trail the way they had come, toward the dark chasms, but saw nothing in particular that he could remember.

That night the Whatcom men made camp above treeline; they lay the canvas awning directly over their blankets for warmth. The glaciated peaks in the distance all around them shone blue in the moonlight. Shreds of mist raced up the slopes toward them like horses running uphill.



It had been necessary to remove the staked Skagit from the stake. There had been some talk about when to do this—before or after he died—just as there had been some low talk about whether to shoot his head with a revolver. His name was Wakashak, Elliott Yekton had said while tears coursed down his face, to John Ireland's wonderment—his name was Wakashak, and he was the well-known son of a hunter, Elliott Yekton's friend; his mother

Photograph courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History

cooked in the logging camp downriver on the shore; he had been seeking his guardian spirit alone in the mountains, as was customary for youths of both sexes; many Thompson Indians would feel very sorry for this. His spirit had already left him, Elliott Yekton said, and gone to the dreary village of dead spirits. John Ireland thought this meant that he was dead, but he was not then dead.

In the end Grogan had handed his revolver to Elliott Yekton, handle out, gravely, and at that moment the Indian youth staked to the ground had died. His breathing stopped and his mouth and shoulders gave way. Without noticing, John Ireland had turned around to see directly and taken a step. Elliott Yekton leaned forward and pressed the side of his head to the young man's sunken breast. After a long moment, he bounded to his feet and sent up a shrieking that gave the Whatcom men pause; they applied themselves to examining the scenery. The black horse was so impressed she raised her head. Next Elliott Yekton grasped the end of his own ponytail, pulled it back so his neck strained, and raised his knife. John Ireland wished he had stayed home. Yekton sawed through his ponytail, and its rawhide thong slipped off and fell to the ground in the blood with the hair. Now his white hair fell wide to his shoulders unbound.

The Thompsons must have driven the stake three or four feet into the ground, for the men could not budge it. Should they slide the Skagit a bit up the stake—the stake entered at his anus—to chop the stake down and ease it out from the bottom, or should they slide him, seated as he was, all the way up and off? At this, his father forcibly led John Ireland back down the trail, and stayed with him there.

John Ireland and his father, who seemed angry, sat straight-legged on stones and looked out at the distant peaks, some of which prospectors had named: Despair, Damnation, Challenger, Terror. It was no kind of country for farms. A railroad seemed as unlikely as a wharf. John Ireland heard an ax chopping. After a while, footsteps approached: It was a troubled Elliott Yekton carrying the dead Skagit over his shoulders, come to wish his *tillicums* good-bye. He was taking the body back. He held a gray wrist in his left hand and a bloody calf in his right; the dead head with its shiny black ponytail hung behind his left elbow. "Good-bye," John Ireland's father said, and, as Elliott Yekton turned down the trail, more faintly, "Good luck."

Their company had continued up the trail and eastward. Here on this bare ridge they made the first of many mountain camps. They slept on stony ground under squares of canvas, and clouds blew into their beds. The fatal, glittering peaks in every direction brewed storms that jumped canyons and blew through their clothes. Snow fell on them, slid above and below them, and concealed glaciers' crevasses. Once during a snowstorm they saw lightning and heard thunder crack below them. Beneath their camps, slopes dropped several thousand feet to hanging valleys where trees killed by avalanches lay heaped. Dirty snowfields sank into melt pools whose waters tasted like nails. They watched a white mountain goat fall from a cliff. The rest of John Ireland's life would seem an extension of these first bivouacs after he saw the staked Skagit; all his subsequent rented rooms and houses were mountain camps from which the lay of the land was forever plain.

The hobbled packhorses found good grass. Tamoree rounded them up in the morning. John Ireland ate and slept; nighthawks hove overhead. Every day they coursed upended slopes on elk trails beneath crumbling glaciers; their prospects were a black sea of peaks. In the chasms beside them, fog swelled, and morning sun cast their walking shadows into the fog, so they seemed to travel with looming and spectral companions who walked on air. They began shooting marmots to eat. Tamoree ran out of horseshoes. Almost every day clouds gathered, chilled, and rained or snowed. From the main pass, they saw a black tower to the north, protruding like a shark fin from its glacier. To the south, the massive overhanging glacier on an unnamed mountain dropped ice once an hour to the valley floor. They climbed a narrow arm over the pass and rose to see ranges of ice and spires, and a thick volcano beyond. John Ireland, hearing his heartbeat, kicked his shoe soles into snowfields. He stared at the pinto's dusty rump as its two pink-edged halves rose and fell when it lifted and set its dumb feet again and again. No one stole the horses, here among the peaks and passes, or on their return on the long Whatcom Trail by Tomyhoi Creek and Chilliwack Lake in the mountains, and they saw no more Thompson sign.

When they returned to civilization at the end of twenty days, they learned that a wire had come ticking into the telegraph office while they were gone. Tacoma, little Tacoma that had paper piers and paper blocks, and one hotel and two saloons, had been awarded the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad. The Northern Pacific tracks would cross the Cascades well south of the Skagit, at Stampede Pass. Tacoma would batten on capital,

and the other towns on the sound would shrivel and die.

In the streets of Goshen, on the county road, and on the named streets of Whatcom along which they led the sore-footed horses, people greeted them, wild with the news. Some held that the railroad had deliberately destroyed Seattle from spite, from hatred of the town and its 2,000 hardworking citizens. Others noted that overconfident Seattle had not felt the need to proffer the many financial inducements Tacoma did. For three years, after all, investors from San Francisco and Portland had been buying up Seattle; Seattle was a shoo-in. Tacoma was handy to the pass, but it had nothing, barely a wheelbarrow. And shipping would have to ply north along the seventy-mile length of Puget Sound, to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, before it could head out to sea.

What about Whatcom? Well, it had never been Whatcom all along, it seemed, and everyone knew it but Whatcom. Of course, Olympia made the most sense to many, and Anacortes thought it would be Anacortes, and Port Townsend had hopes, and so even did Mukilteo.

The men and the boy heard all this, dazed. At Goshen on the Nooksack River they spent their last night together, and their first night under a roof, at Adolph Sharp's place; he lived there on sixty acres, and grew potatoes on five. They ate breakfast together in the Veseys' rooming house. Jay Tamoree said, "I could eat a folded tarpaulin." The men and the boy removed their hats indoors, and revealed around each head a shining, rippling ridge of hair where hat brims had pressed. Adolph wiped his striped goatee on a cloth napkin. Tom seemed to study his son. Tom had shaved that morning for the first time, and every time he turned his head they all noticed.

Outside, by the tied horses on the village street, Adolph extracted his blanket roll from a pack box, and stuck his revolver in it, and held his rifle. He pounded the black horse's flank, which about killed it, and noted that it had been a pretty good, hardworking, horse. He shook hands all around, and his Mexican hat bobbed. He looked at John Ireland and laid one hand on top of his head, fingers spread like a claw; he gave a squeeze, and turned up the street. Tom Sharp and Jay Tamoree redistributed the pack load and fastened it down.

In Whatcom that evening, they unloaded the horses at the livery stable. The horses balanced unbudging on their legs like tables, hung their heads, and looked like they would never take another step in this world. Conrad Grogan and Jay Tamoree returned to their homes. Tom and John Ireland Sharp returned to theirs.

In the two story house on Prospect Street the two washed and ate, and ate. Viola and Vesta crowded the benches where they sat. The twins looked uncannily vivid, unaware, motile, detailed, like human birds. They wore long black dresses—curious garments, John Ireland thought. John Ireland's mother wore a dress, too, a green dress, and a stiff white apron; she carried them a pan of cinnamon rolls. The kitchen was close, and baking had heated its air and dark walls. John Ireland's brothers, Frank and Willy, looked him over awkwardly and found nothing to admire in his skull collection that he brought forth and displayed—in fact, the soiled skulls looked even to John Ireland more like trash here than treasure, and he swept them roughly back in their sack. Frank and Willy took their plates outside; they were eight and six. The cinnamon rolls were packed tight, and the pan was hot.

They wondered, John Ireland and Tom, what Adolph Sharp and Conrad Grogan and Jay Tamoree were doing right now; for most of a month they had known what each was up to, always. They did not look at each other, nor had they ever, really. At home, John Ireland rarely saw his father, who was always working at the sawmill, and often away; he himself roamed the town with Frank and Willy, read books, and investigated the beach or the wharf. Three months a year, they attended school. He looked at the toe of his shoe. All that would start up again, like a riptide, and sweep him away. He did not know if he wanted to step back from it or step into it.

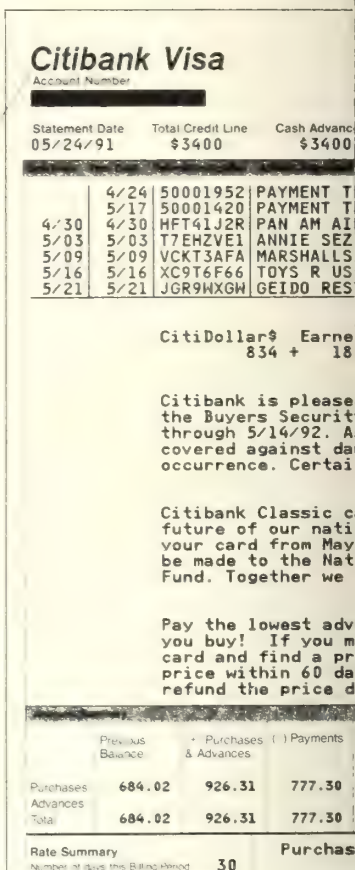
"Imagine Tacoma!" John Ireland's mother said, but he and his father could not.

She had brushed her yellow hair into a tidy bun at the back of her neck, behind her head, where her spine met her skull. Her eyes were enormous and round, like a horse's or an angel's. Her damp face shone. She studied him, John Ireland knew, when he bent or turned his head. Everything in the kitchen—the canning kettles, the long-legged sink, the stove handles, woodbox, window frame, floor—John Ireland recognized with surprise. His mother said land prices were already dropping in Whatcom and people were leaving. His father said he did not know about the new southern pass, but the Skagit passes they had mapped made a fine series. There was good grazing for a road crew's stock. The route through the passes was wide as a highway, and the grade was no more than fifty feet to the mile. ■

PLASTIC, FAN

A troubled bank puts it all on the card And o

Their loan portfolios brimming with bad commercial real-estate debt, the nation's giant "money center" banks are in trouble. Citicorp, the country's largest bank, needs $4 billion to offset mounting losses. Luckily for Citicorp, its Citibank credit-card subsidiary dominates the U.S. credit-card business, with a market share of 15 percent—more than twice as much as the next largest issuer, Chase Manhattan. By and large, average cardholders are more reliable when it comes to paying their bills than the developers Citicorp loaned to. There are 31 million Citibank Visas and MasterCards in 17.8 million households, accounting for $47 billion in annual merchandise charges. Citicorp's consumer operations, dominated by the Citibank credit-card subsidiary, returned a profit of almost $1 billion last year—half of which went to offset 1990 losses in other Citicorp divisions. Burdened with some $13 billion in non-performing loans, the bank managed to issue cards to 5.5 million new customers last year, despite the recession, and Citicorp officials believe that legions of mall-goers, shouldering Citibank credit cards, will lead the company back into the black by edging themselves into the red—deep red, in fact. The soldiers of Citicorp's fortune are burdened by rates and fees approaching those of usurers.



Citibank Visa

Account Number

Statement Date	Total Credit Line	Cash Advanc
05/24/91	$3400	$3400

	4/24	50001952	PAYMENT T
	5/17	50001420	PAYMENT T
4/30	4/30	HFT41J2R	PAN AM AI
5/03	5/03	T7EHZVE1	ANNIE SEZ
5/09	5/09	VCKT3AFA	MARSHALLS
5/16	5/16	XC9T6F66	TOYS R US
5/21	5/21	JGR9WXGH	GEIDO RES

CitiDollar$ Earne
834 + 18

Citibank is please
the Buyers Securit
through 5/14/92. A
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Citibank Classic c
future of our nati
your card from May
be made to the Nat
Fund. Together we

Pay the lowest adv
you buy! If you m
card and find a pr
price within 60 da
refund the price d

	Previous Balance	+ Purchases & Advances	( ) Payments
Purchases	684.02	926.31	777.30
Advances			
Total	684.02	926.31	777.30

Rate Summary — Purchas

Number of days this Billing Period: 30

Balance Subject to Finance Charge

Periodic Rate: 1.6500

Nominal Annual Percentage Rate: 19.8

Annual Percentage Rate: 19.8

SEND PAYMENTS TO: CITIBANK P.O. BOX 6

Make check or money order payable in U.S. dollars on a

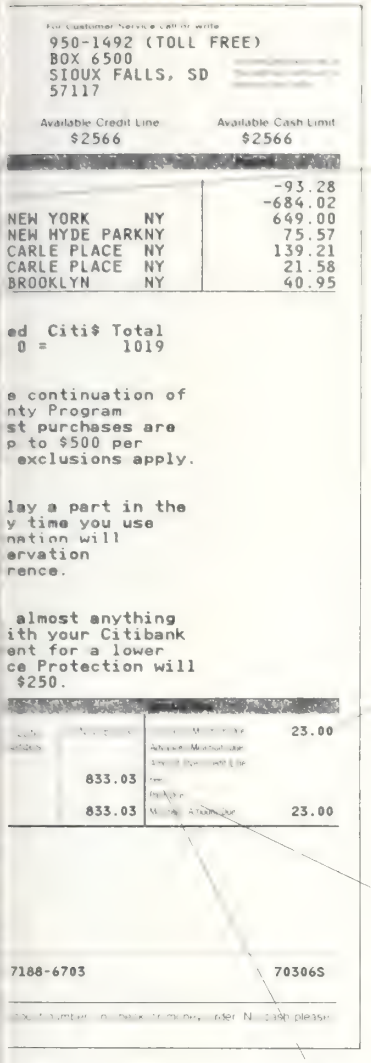
In some neighborhoods where loans are secured with threats of bodily harm, a 19.8 percent interest rate is called "vigorish." Since 1989, the prime lending rate—what banks charge many "reliable" corporations—has fallen from 11.5 percent to 8.5 percent. Yet no matter how low the prime rate falls, Citicorp sticks to a credit-card interest rate reached in the inflationary early Eighties. Today there's a record gap between how much Citicorp charges corporations for loans and how much it charges its cardholders, and the bank has no plans to narrow it. In fact, the bank has purchased portfolios of cheaper credit cards from other banks and then *raised* the rate. Last year, for example, Citicorp acquired $674 million worth of cards at 17.9 percent from the troubled Bank of New England. Citicorp then hiked the rate for these unsuspecting customers to 19.8 percent, a move that will bring the bank an annual gain of $12.8 million.

Citicorp's exorbitant interest rate on credit cards isn't the only reason not to take cash advances. If you buy merchandise with the card, you get up to a one-month grace period. But cash advances have no grace period: Finance charges begin to accrue the minute you leave the bank. And don't think that because you've paid an annual membership fee that you won't be charged any other fees. For each advance from a teller, the bank charges an additional "cash advance fee" of 2 percent, up to $10.

Glenn von Nostitz and Michael Alcamo are consumer advocates in the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs.

STIC PROFITS

olders, *by Glenn von Nostitz and Michael Alcamo*



950-1492 (TOLL FREE)
BOX 6500
SIOUX FALLS, SD
57117

Available Credit Line $2566
Available Cash Limit $2566

-93.28
-684.02
NEW YORK NY 649.00
NEW HYDE PARKNY 75.57
CARLE PLACE NY 139.21
CARLE PLACE NY 21.58
BROOKLYN NY 40.95

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7188-6703 70306S

Citicorp would prefer, of course, that you not pay off your bill quickly; two thirds of cardholders meet the bank's wish. In addition to collecting interest on the outstanding balance, the bank has another use for its cardholders who regularly maintain a balance due. These accounts may be bundled by the millions and sold as securities on Wall Street—just like bonds or mortgages. Citicorp issued $9.4 billion in credit-card securities last year alone.

Thanks to a modest minimum payment due each month—just one thirty-sixth of the total owed on balances exceeding $720 and a flat $20 for balances under $720—it appears easy to service debt each month. As a result, outstanding credit-card debt on the 227 million MasterCards and Visas held by Americans—more than 10 percent of them Citibank cards—jumped from $29 billion in 1981 to $154 billion last year, despite the fact that credit-card interest is no longer tax deductible. Even if your outstanding balance is a mere $15, you'll have to pay a "minimum finance charge" of 50 cents—effectively an annual simple interest rate of 40 percent. That's what it says right there in the minuscule print on the reverse of your statement. How could you have missed it?

This cardholder is paid up prior to this bill. Given recent payment histories, maybe corporations should be paying the 19.8 percent rate, not consumers: Citicorp's delinquent commercial real-estate loans constitute 29 percent of its total real-estate portfolio. The bank's credit-card delinquency rate, by contrast, is about 5 percent. The average commercial real-estate delinquency rate for the nation's fifteen money-center banks is 20 percent. Clearly, holders of credit cards are being forced to cough up money lost by others. Citicorp and its colleagues were willing to restructure the tottering debt loads of highly leveraged corporations. How about a break for cardholders?

The annual membership fee ($20 for the "Classic" and $50 for the "Preferred" Visa) alone brings Citibank $450 million in revenue a year—or virtually all of Citicorp's 1990 total profits. Citicorp, seemingly unsatisfied with mere interest, has grown fond of fees. The bank charges an "overlimit fee" of $10 if you exceed your credit line. And if your minimum payment is overdue, you'll effectively pay twice—the usual 19.8 percent rate on the overdue balance plus a "late fee" of $10. Neither the overlimit nor the late fee is mentioned in the seventeen paragraphs of "Information About Your Citibank Classic Account" on the reverse side of your monthly statement.

THE NAMED AND THE CELESTIAL

Summer, with cows, on the *alpage*

By John Berger

The barometer, nailed onto the outside wood of the chalet, is still there. It has survived the winter. We put it up four years ago. It's not the sort of barometer you can buy in a shop, down below on the plain, where the rivers flow calmly to the sea; it consists of a small branch of a fir tree, stripped of its bark, and is used up here on the *alpage*, an alpine plateau at an altitude of 5,250 feet where, each summer, men and women from the village below come to graze their cows in the mountain pastures. Nailed upside down, the *alpage*-variety barometer has more or less the form of the letter Y, and when it's going to rain or snow the little branch moves closer to the larger one, reducing the angle between them. One quickly learns to read the angle—as with the hands of a clock. The farther apart they are, the finer it's going to be.

The underlying mechanism is simple. When it's going to snow, fir trees retract their branches, so that the weight of the snow they'll have to bear is reduced. And this reaction is programmed in the wood of every branch, even in those smaller than a little finger. More surprising is the fact that the wood is now so dry that it's apparently dead. Yet it still works, and we still look at it every morning.

◆

Gustave, with his cows, has already been here a week on the Imes plateau. Gustave, thin as a branch of wood, with his way of talking like a lawyer. We'll be neighbors for the next three months. In the lull of the afternoon, on the ledge of the last fir trees, overlooking the cows, we talk about his cousin Henri, who died fifty-seven years ago.

I can't tell you what he died of, Gustave says.

No.

But I know what he died of. It's that I can't tell you.

Yes.

That ought to be enough to tell you.

It is, I say.

He was very young, Henri, and then this happened, and eventually he died at the age of thirty-two. You follow me? Gustave fixes me with his blue eyes, one of which, as the result of an accident, is blind.

Perfectly.

He is relieved that I've understood—at least one small puzzle has been solved. After a pause, he says: Of the three brothers, Henri was the best carpenter, far and away the best carpenter.

We both fall silent. From where we are sitting on the grass we can see the houses of Messy below, small as thrown dice on a green cloth.

◆

There's a whole cluster in a vase on the table. Their flowers, no larger than a child's fingernail, are the color of purple blood mixed with rust. We picked them early this morning. They grow—the wild rhododendrons—high up, usually on northern slopes, for they do not like too much sunlight. We climbed up toward *le Pic*. Clouds from the valley below were being

John Berger lives in a small French peasant village in the Haute-Savoie. His most recent book is Lilac and Flag, *a novel.*

hustled up toward us. White, gray veils hiding everything. Being temporarily lost up here is ever present as a possibility, and after a few weeks this benign risk becomes a kind of companion.

The sun was hot and dissolved the mist. Then denser clouds enveloped us. Visible or invisible, all the time on the northern slope there was birdsong. Stonechats singing like larks, and *venturons*, flying at waist level from one tall yellow gentian to another, making their *tchititi* noise.

Every sound changes up here. Voices become as distinct as those heard in the head. And, continually, day and night, never completely stopping, there is the Chinese chorus of cowbells. Now, in their vase, the blood-rust flowers burn darkly with a solar energy.

◆

Just as it was getting dark, Gustave came to our chalet. We hadn't lit the lamp yet. He said one of his cows was missing. He had just been to fetch them from the forest. He hadn't counted them until he got them near the cowshed. There were nineteen and there should have been twenty.

Is she with the heifers in the electric park? I ask.

We go and look and count eleven.

One's missing, says Gustave, if she was one of mine, but she's not one of mine, she's a lodger. If she was one of mine . . . she's a lodger . . .

In his anxiety Gustave repeats each phrase several times. He looks much thinner. His clothes hang on him as though they belong to an elder brother. What little flesh he has has left to look for the missing cow. Only his blind eye remains unperturbed.

It's too dark, he says, to look in the forest, no moon tonight, no moon, so it's too dark!

I'm on the point of saying: You'll find her tomorrow. But stop myself. The missing cow risks little. To lose one of your cattle is, however, to lose face.

I shan't sleep tonight, it's stupid. Stupid.

Let's count again! I say.

Under the Milky Way, with our pocket lamps, we count the animals again. There are twenty.

One was lying behind another! Gustave announces, and becomes his normal size again.

I go to bed. The next morning, before the sun has reached the valley below, he tells me:

I was thinking during the night. I'm going to stay here with my animals until the autumn. Then I shall go down to school!

School?



Photographs by Jean Mohr

Yes, school.
How!
To learn to count to twenty!

◆

After the long trek up to the *alpage*, the cows give little milk for three or four days; they are tired and perhaps they suffer from the cultural shock of emigration. Then the month of abundance begins; they give the great milk of their lives, creamy enough to heal all the sores of the world. The great milk is the result of the mountain pasture, of the fat green grass. In this grass the wild flowers are brighter than the same flowers which were in bloom on the plain a month before. Their colors are more vivid. The blue of the mountain cornflower, the magenta of the *compagnon rouge*, the ultra violet of the crocus.

ON THE ALPAGE THE COWS GIVE THE GREAT MILK OF THEIR LIVES, CREAMY ENOUGH TO HEAL ALL THE SORES OF THE WORLD

◆

The full moon comes up from behind the Arête des Troncs where Arturo has his goats. His father was a shepherd too. At the Arête des Troncs the moon must be coming up from behind Le Joratin. When it comes, it's always like a visit, desired yet unexpected. Watching, I think of all the shepherds I've known—including the one hidden in my own name.

On this horizon
engraved on each day
like the crack in the coffee bowl
cows become the size they were
when I was four

To the north of the cows
graze the rocks
named the Tall Ones
there where the moon rises
when all has been done

First a pink halo
the color of the dress
worn at a dance by her
whom Father they say
went barefoot for

The dress has no hem my son

A lake of pale skin in the sky
there where the boys went swimming
leaving behind
their clothes in the grass
never to be boys again

The horizon opens like a mouth my son
Slowly slowly the moon's
bone white head is born
and your body of light
slips trailing out
from where my God you came.

I go and say good night to Gustave, who is locking up the chickens. We'll all be asleep in a minute.

◆

On the plain a rainbow is something that arches above you and spans the landscape. It defines the vault of the sky. From here on the *alpage*, you can look down on one. It falls in a curve, like a cow's piss, onto the farms below.

◆

Clement, who has fifty cows, is getting rid of one because she no longer gives much milk. A truck will come this morning to fetch her for the *abattoir*. After the milking, when he lets out his other cows and they start to amble to Imes where they will graze all day, he keeps her behind. As we clean the stables, he says: She hasn't much longer to live!

A statement of fact. It's on his mind. Over the years Clement has seen hundreds of cows loaded into the truck. He never hesitates to sell a cow for meat when she stops giving enough milk. Nevertheless, when the moment arrives, he's aware of its significance and makes no effort to hide this awareness from himself.

As we leave the cows' stable to go and clean out the goats, he pats Comtesse on her rump.

My poor cuckoo, he hisses, never again will you go to Imes . . .

◆

When there's a storm, we are all frightened, all fourteen inhabitants of this mountain. The weather up here is like an adult as seen by a child. Violent. Unpredictable. Much given to anger about nothing. Nothing? Anyway, there's nothing to do except pray. If the storm breaks in the middle of the night and we're in bed, we get dressed. Clothes can't make much difference either way, but it's a mark of respect. The metal in the rocks, which surround us, attracts the lightning. The thunder goes on echoing until the next clap.

Last night there was such a storm. The lightning with its white-faced light made every crag around us look as close as your hand. The storm was throwing rocks. The animals huddled together, dumb.

Everyone has a story about how once in the mountains they saw a ball of fire and how it came through the stable window and killed a

cow or two and then went out of the door.

You don't believe them of course—until you go out one morning after a storm, as it happened this morning, and there I find, a few yards from the chalet, a charred black perfect circle of burnt grass.

◆

As people gaze into fires, from here you can gaze at the world. The grass is turning lion-colored. A perfect summer day. Below, a little mist is following the valleys like a white river. Otherwise all the air is slightly blue—like the inside of a mussel shell. Everything is laid out below, visible or immanent, behind this almost transparent blue. Each chalet, each road, each dark wood.



This is the magic of gazing down after two months up here. The detail, the particular, the named, is visible; and, at the same time, what is unnameable, continuous, celestial—in the sense of belonging to the sky—is equally present. Near and far, static and dynamic, unchanging and ephemeral. Down there you no longer see a landscape as such. It is the site of life. More like an animal than a land, and looking at it, you think of the Creation, because you are so aware of the unfolding flux which has led to the present.

◆

On the far side of Le Joratin, a flock of crows is circling in the sky. There's something dead there, says Gustave, if there's that number of them, there's something dead!

It turns out to be a heifer. She must have strayed up from the other side of the mountain. Doubtless one of Edouard's heifers. Edouard is a giant with a Hollywood smile, a cowboy walk, and a reputation for being *insouciant*. Years ago he bought one side of the mountain, and every summer he pastures thirty heifers there, coming up to see them only once a week. The rest of the time he works in a tollbooth on the autoroute that goes to Italy.

She must have been dead for at least four days. Her eyes have already been pecked. Flies, as dense as bees in a hive, are crawling around and in her anus. It looks as if she collapsed instantly. Her legs are twisted and her neck is extended as though by the weight of her head falling. I go down to the village to telephone Edouard. I'll be up tomorrow, he says. God willing.

Two days later he comes up with his tractor and trailer. We attach a rope around the heifer's neck and another to a hind leg. She weighs a good 800 pounds. Despite the slope in our favor, it's hard to get her down to the dirt road.

During the past couple of days the flies and heat have detached the anus, the teeth have turned a hideous gray, and the stench is really bad. We close our lips to it but it still gets down to our stomachs. Her hide, no longer shiny, is the same color as the baked earth over which we are trying to haul her.

Edouard believes she was bitten by a snake. A snake, or a heart attack, he says, offering me a flask of *eau de vie*.

Clement arrives from Imes to give his opinion. Lightning! he says. You see the purple mark on her udder? That's lightning. She was killed in the last storm, a week ago.

I'd say a viper, says Edouard.

I'm talking about insurance, says Clement.

Gustave arrives. I've seen cattle just give up the ghost, he says, a question of circumstances. In her case, we'll never know . . .

For the insurance—lightning, Clement insists.

As they argue, a passenger jet on its way to Italy crosses the perfectly blue sky and leaves behind its immaculate trail.

◆

If left alone now, the cows would make their way to the road that goes down. There is little more to eat. Hawks hover all day over the bare slopes, waiting for moles and field mice. In the morning the handles of the wheelbarrow are sometimes frozen. Apart from gray, black, and white, the only color left up here is the burnt-brown of the grass. The dogs can smell snow in the air. The mountains have changed from stone to metal. It will soon be Toussaint—All Saints' Day. It's time to go down. ■

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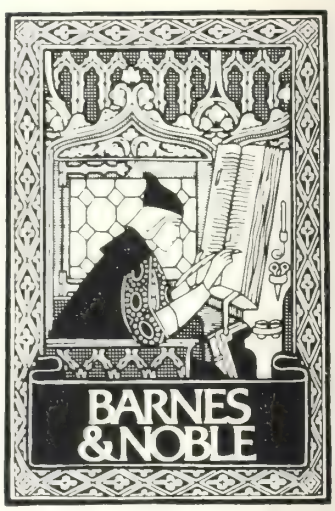
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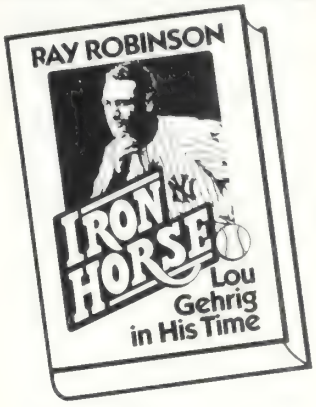
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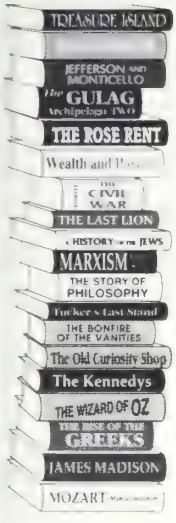
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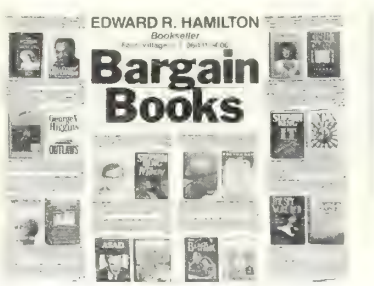
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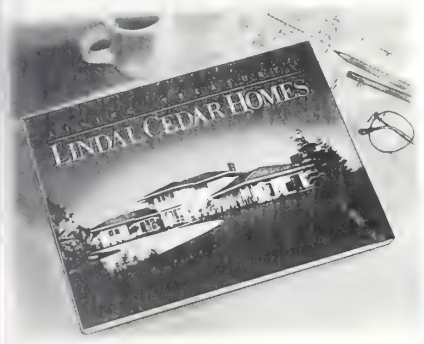
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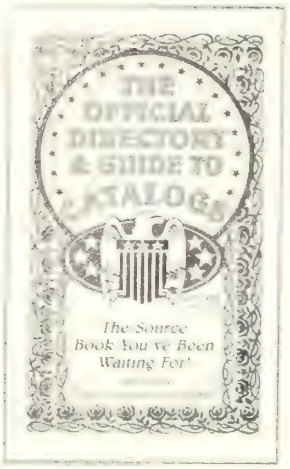
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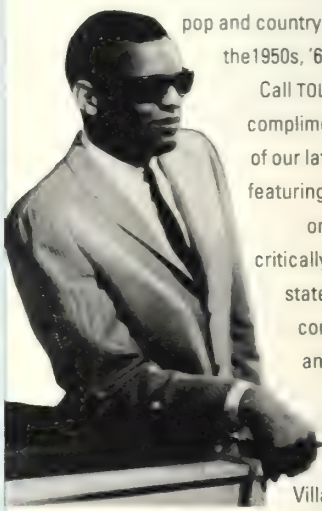


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Tuning in to *The Gary Byrd Show*

By James Traub

Here is how a story travels on *The Gary Byrd Show:* One morning last January, about a week before the beginning of the Persian Gulf war, Byrd, the host of the most popular black radio talk show in New York City, asked his live audience at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, "Did anybody hear about that young black brother that got shot in the head?" The incident involved a Marine stationed in Saudi Arabia who had been killed by a bullet fired by a fellow soldier. The dead man, Lance Corporal Anthony Stewart, had complained of racism in letters home; the shooter was apparently "a European or a Latino," said Byrd. The following day Byrd added that the Marine Corps had changed the cause of death from suicide to an accident; the family was challenging the account. Byrd wasn't saying murder, but he made that conclusion sound inescapable. A caller had already said that the killing proved that blacks could depend on no one save one another—not even Latinos.



Two weeks later a spokesman for the Stewart family, Stonewall Odom, appeared on the show. The family, said Odom, had learned that the soldier who shot their son was an unstable character given to waving his gun at fellow Marines. Stewart, apparently, was the victim not of racism but of criminal recklessness. But the germ had already escaped into the atmosphere. The week after Odom's appearance, I was talking to a guy sitting in the row in front of me at the Apollo about a black scholar who had had the temerity to suggest that the military had begun to purge itself of racism. "He's full of shit," said my interlocutor. "He's reading from a script. You know about that lance corporal got shot in the back of the head by a white guy? So he's full of shit."

You probably have never even heard of Lance Corporal Stewart. In New York the story was carried in only one of the mainstream newspapers, *Newsday*, which is the only one that shows consistent interest in black affairs. It's not clear exactly what the significance of the soldier's story is, but on *The Gary Byrd Show* the lance corporal has joined the pantheon of martyrs to racism. The facts will soon be forgotten.

Talk radio, as Gary Byrd put it to me with typical delicacy, "has been very much a forum for the venting of emotions and perspectives and so forth." Only in the last two decades, however, have blacks had the financial power to own their own radio stations, and thereby vent their own emotions and perspectives over the airwaves. According to Janice Graham, founder of the National Council of Black Talk Radio and host of the talk show *Our Common Ground* on WPBR in West Palm Beach, Florida, about half a dozen other programs can claim an impact similar to Byrd's. She mentions *The Ty Wansley Show* on WVON in Chicago, as well as shows in St. Louis and Houston.

The Gary Byrd Show goes out over WLIB-AM, which is owned by New York's largest black media company, Inner City Broadcasting. Inner City was established by Percy Sutton, a former borough president of Manhattan. That the station—and Byrd's show—reaches an audience that matters in New York was underscored this past spring when Mayor David Dinkins, having concluded that his core support in the black community was dissolving, decided to pay a visit to the Apollo, where he endured shouted criticisms and insults from the audience with his usual combination of dignity, restraint, and vagueness. The show plays too significant a role in the formation of black opinion to be dismissed. During the prolonged agony of the Tawana Brawley case, Brawley's advisers and attorneys, Al Sharpton, Alton Maddox, and C. Vernon Mason, spoke to Byrd almost weekly. When the three

James Traub is the author of Too Good to Be True: The Outlandish Story of Wedtech, *published by Doubleday. He lives in New York City.*

Photographs by Jan Staller

[illegible] the Apollo to criticize [illegible] Cuomo's selection [illegible] prosecutor in this case, [illegible] himself called in to defend the choice, an act of calculated [illegible]

You can drop by the Apollo and take in the show from ten in the morning until two every day from Monday to Thursday. The trip itself is instructive, since middle-class Manhattanites rarely find a reason to visit 125th Street. The elegant stone facades along the south side of the street recall the era when Harlem was a bourgeois, largely German-Jewish neighborhood, and the succeeding era when white shopkeepers catered to an increasingly black clientele. Now the street is lined with the sort of tacky discount stores that cater to poor people. The only big buildings are the ones that house federal and state government offices. Lassitude has won out over entrepreneurial vigor as the dominant mood of the street. On a windy day, trash and even shards of glass tumble out of the vacant lots and pinwheel down the sidewalks.

Each day about a hundred people—and pretty much the *same* hundred—can be found in the Apollo, an elegant throwback to the era of the Harlem Renaissance. The balconies are still plush, and gilded urns and laurel leaves form a noble border to the high proscenium arch. It's an oddly mellow atmosphere, considering the violence of the polemics issuing from the stage. On my first few visits, I made a point of smiling graciously at everyone and always kept my *New York Times* carefully hidden beneath a copy of the *Amsterdam News*, the largest of the city's black newspapers. But after a while I realized that, while I was considered an oddity and even an object of suspicion, nobody was going to hassle me—that wasn't the mood of the show. Had I been a black reporter sitting in the audience of, say, Radio Bensonhurst, I might have felt a good deal less comfortable.

On my first visit to the Apollo, the subject of the day was the Tawana Brawley case. It was the Brawley case that had first brought home to many New Yorkers the feeling that whites and blacks had come to live in parallel psychic universes. The facts that finally emerged led to the conclusion that Tawana Brawley had invented her story of abduction and rape by a group of whites in Wappinger's Falls, New York, in November 1987. But since her story, like Lance Corporal Stewart's, had proved something many blacks already believed to be true, and since the idea that she had lied seemed like a rebuke, a second set of facts had emerged, facts that seemed to vindicate her story. There was a white reality and a black reality, a white meaning and a black meaning. A few days before I visited *The Gary Byrd Show* I had had a bizarre conversation with a group of people, all black, waiting to get into the Central Park jogger trial. I had thought that I was fairly deeply versed in the Brawley case, but everyone on line knew of details I had never heard that definitively proved the theory of rape and cover-up. I had been reading the white media, they had been reading the black media—and listening to Gary Byrd.

It was, I was told, "press day" on the show, and I envisioned a group of reporters, white and black, kicking around the racial resonances of the Brawley case, à la *Washington Week in Review*. I had the wrong show. Sitting up on the Apollo stage with Byrd were the publishers of three Harlem newspapers, including Wilbert Tatum, owner of the *Amsterdam News*. Byrd began by checking whether all agreed that the grand jury report and the press accounts of the Brawley affair had been transparent, racist falsehoods. All did. Then Tatum took the stage to praise Tawana Brawley as a latter-day African princess and to accuse the white press of deliberately lying in order to substitute a black villain for a white one. The crowd in the Apollo hooted with derision.

The real target of the day was the *New York Times*. Six reporters at the *Times* had written a book called *Outrage*, which painstakingly laid out their hunt for the facts in the Brawley case. In their book the reporters had illustrated the racial gulf by using as a choral voice a group of black men who regularly met at a Brooklyn coffee shop. They had been described with careful deference. Three of the men had agreed to appear on the show, and they vied with one another to attack the book. One of them, a seventy-year-old college professor named William Mackey Jr., told the audience that the one black *Times* reporter, E. R. Shipp, was a lesbian—otherwise, how account for her hatred of Tawana, a fellow black woman?

Here was a counter-reality, a counter-mythos, with alternative facts and alternative motives. And yet it was something much more complex than the inchoate ranting that Eric Bogosian captured in *Talk Radio*. As I began returning to the show, I discovered that part of its special fascination was that I could watch the counter-reality take shape. One day, after the lance corporal cycle had been completed, I heard Byrd interview Sonny Carson, a notorious "community activist" in Brooklyn who had helped organize an interminable boycott of a Korean grocer who had allegedly assaulted a Haitian woman. Carson appeared on the show the day after a jury had acquitted the Korean man on all charges. Apparently it was Tawana Brawley all over again. The moral that Byrd drew from the trial was that the word of a black woman "ultimately meant nothing." The boycott, Carson said, would go on, would widen.

Carson analyzed the situation historically. "The Jews," he explained, "when they left, they made sure that they turned those stores over to people who would continue the trickery." Oppression took new forms but was ever the same. Byrd, who sometimes plays a very deft devil's advocate, said that some people wondered why blacks didn't shop in their own stores. Maybe the Koreans just sell better produce? That was another one of the lies, said Carson; "the fish that's fried in Korean stores is fish that's ready to go bad."

Carson, thinking on his feet,

seemed to have plucked those fish out of a side pocket. But it had the same effect as Mackey's slur on E. R. Shipp: It nullified the threat of objective reality, in this case the reality that the Koreans simply play by the rules of the marketplace. It vindicated the counter-reality of "the Jews" and the eternal recurrence of trickery. A few minutes later a young woman from Newark called to say that a raid on a local Korean grocer had found a freezer "full of skinned rats and cats, with onions on the other side," all to be mixed together into the soy sauce. The audience groaned as one. First the bad fish, then the skinned rats and cats. The little stories sustain the big truth. The woman said that she and others were organizing a protest.

The little stories and the big truths need each other; on *The Gary Byrd Show* they mingle and take on added force. I grew accustomed to hearing these skinned-cats-and-rats stories, usually volunteered by members of the audience whom Byrd invites up to one of two microphones stationed in front of the stage. Black Cabbage Patch dolls cost ten dollars more than white ones. The Central Park jogger couldn't have been raped because no signs of trauma were found. The Constitution still says that a black man is only three fifths of a person. Africans were the first people to worship one God. Africans were already here when Columbus "discovered" America.



The stories were true because they were True—because they corroborated a big truth. Conspiracy theories require the soil of such an overwhelming truth in order to take root. I was sometimes reminded of my friend Vince, an insanely rabid Pittsburgh Pirates fan who is convinced that the Pirates and then the Oakland A's were bribed by the mob to roll over in front of the Cincinnati Reds last year. Otherwise, how could you explain the lowly Reds beating the great Pirates in the pennant and the A's in the World Series? The same mental process was no doubt at work when President Reagan described the Contras as the moral equivalent of the Founding Fathers, or when the Palestinians persuaded themselves that Saddam Hussein was trouncing the coalition forces. The underlying emotion dictates the facts; no fact can be too strange if it vindicates the emotion.

But, of course, the Palestinians *have* been deprived of a homeland, and blacks have been enslaved and oppressed and isolated—thus the rhetorical force of the conspiracy theories. One morning I heard a sobbing mother tell the story of her daughter Shereema, a tiny woman of ninety-two pounds. When a crack dealer stole Shereema's radio, the girl's fiancé flagged down a police car. The officers, irritated at being stopped for so trivial an offense, beat up the fiancé and broke Shereema's arm. The distraught mother begged the Reverend Al Sharpton, sitting on the stage with Byrd, to use his powers to intervene. Sharpton delivered on cue, bellowing, "They declared war on us! Where is the manhood in our community that should stand up for a young woman like this?" Sharpton vowed to fight, even unto death if need be.

It all seemed like theater to me, and I turned around to ask two girls sitting behind me what they thought about the story. One girl said that her boyfriend had gotten kicked around by the cops. The other said that, only the week before, the police had stopped her as she went through the non-paying gate in the subway, even though she had flashed her student card. The Shereema story sounded true to them; it confirmed a truth they had already felt. Indeed, a few days before, I had heard a man named Frank Budd vividly describe an attack made on him by a gang of Hasidic Jews who mistakenly thought that he had hit a child with his station wagon; later, in the hospital, the police treated him as if he had been at fault. It sounded like the nightmare of every black person in New York. The story sounded true to me, and perhaps the Shereema story would have sounded true as well had I not assumed that the police do not break the arms of black women out of pique. What is the psychic gulf between blacks and whites, after all, but a vivid reflection of the experiential gulf that lies between them? Whites are isolated from black reality as blacks are isolated from white reality.

During a break in the show one day I was being harangued by Melvin Green, a member of the Trotskyist New Alliance Party, and a younger, bigger, angrier man, who said that I could call him "X." They lectured me on the need for massive reparations for black people, on the jogger case, the S&Ls, and the Gulf war. I mentioned that I was against the war myself. They both looked stunned.

u assume that all white
ink the same way?" I asked

... Melvin looked at me like I was trying to pull his leg. *Of course* all white people think the same way. It occurred to me that Melvin had probably not had many more political conversations with whites recently than most whites are likely to have with blacks.

The conversation ended in an unexpected way. As we were walking out the door, X, who seemed almost unhinged, was storming about the white media and integration and "that Jewboy Robert Abrams." (Abrams, New York's attorney general, was the special prosecutor appointed by Cuomo in the Brawley case.) He sheared off, still shouting, but Melvin suddenly rejoined me as I was heading down into the subway. He wanted to know what I had thought about the show.

It was an honest question, so I told him that I was disturbed by the way in which dubious rumors instantly took on the solidity of facts. To my surprise he murmured, "We reach out too soon." And then, either thinking of what I had said or of X, he suddenly added, "You probably noticed a lot of anger." He realized, he said, that the anger could help discredit some serious black activism.

The Gary Byrd Show offers consolation and reassurance to a bitter and frustrated audience, but Byrd himself is neither bitter nor frustrated. The Imhotep, as he calls himself—Imhotep was an Egyptian sage and scholar—has been a successful radio personality since he was seventeen and, he told me, a well-paid one too. He is a friendly interviewer and an active listener. While I spoke with him he was fiddling with his ever-present laptop computer; I noticed that the embroidery of his African cap matched the embroidery running down his jersey shirt. He is self-evidently a man to whom professional values matter. The more I asked him about the Reverend Sharpton and global white supremacy and so on, the more gently agitated he became. He wanted to remind me that the show is carefully laid out—on his laptop—to flow from racial billingsgate to segments on education and culture, personal health and numerology, and the occasional dramatic performance. Byrd said that he kept a professional eye on radio shows like *A Prairie Home Companion*. "I don't do the show to get off on a vicarious dynamic of controversy," he said. "That's not really what I am."

That, in fact, is exactly what makes the show so powerful in its way. Byrd has the gift of evoking anger without himself ever becoming angry or even altering the modulation of his voice. His professionalism and his silken manner have the effect of legitimizing the outrageous things said on the show and making them sound practically normal. He can prompt a guest into saying that public school authorities are waging a conscious campaign to destroy black youth and make it sound like a colloquy on farm prices. And Byrd knows where to draw the line. When one of the house lunatics gets up to start ranting about Mayor Dinkins's secret membership in the Trilateral Commission, Byrd will say, "Now, hold on, brother," and then conclude, "but the brother has touched on a very important issue."

The show has a distinctly intellectual tone, which is more than can be said for most of the Imhotep's competition. Indeed, *The Gary Byrd Show* is one of the few radio programs with an ideology of its own, an ideology whose fundamental premise is that life is a Darwinian struggle for racial advantage. Dr. Leonard Jeffries, a professor of African studies at City College who has enjoyed some notoriety for his theory that blacks are a benign "people of the sun" while whites are malevolent "ice people," came on the show to explain that Christopher Columbus had exported to the New World the European system of "institutionalized genocide and enslavement." Over the centuries the system ramified into chattel slavery, and then into wage slavery, and then into debt slavery. Now, said Jeffries, we are witnessing "the death throes of the European system." The next era will be the era of Africa—so long as black people come together to devise "an African world agenda."

Here was the principle of eternal recurrence in meta-historical form. Sonny Carson had suggested that the Koreans were the Jews in a new form; the Reverend Al had said that Yusuf Hawkins, the black teenager killed in a racial attack in Bensonhurst in the summer of 1989, was the new Emmett Till. Nothing changed; domination simply assumed a new shape. I discovered this principle reductio ad absurdum one morning when I turned on the show to hear Dr. Frances Cress Welsing, a psychiatrist, expound her theory that racism is a consequence of white fear of genetic annihilation through race-mixing—a fear, in other words, of pigment vulnerability. The Cress Theory, as it's called, has the immense virtue of bringing racism down to a biological level, a level at which everything is inevitable and hopes for amelioration are ludicrous. "Their own behaviorial data suggests that they cannot stop what they are doing," Dr. Welsing explained to the audience.

I asked Byrd if he believed in the Cress Theory himself. After first asking me to explain the theory in order to make sure I had grasped its nuances, Gary said, "I think it's possible." No one, he said, had convincingly refuted the theory. But he didn't agree with Cress that persuasion could do nothing to improve race relations. "Communications science," Gary said, using "behavior modification," could bring people around. I think this was Byrd's convoluted way of saying that shows like his could advance the debate. This struck me as unlikely.

The simple fact is that no middle ground is permitted on the show. Since the ideology presumes that white reality is unitary, black reality must likewise be unitary. It's as if one took President Reagan's mind for a model. Almost from the time I

first started listening to the show, I noticed that Byrd was on a kick about Martin Luther King. King was an "elder," in Byrd's Afrocentric phraseology, a figure of uncontested greatness. But there was one problem: Many white people felt that way as well. This convergence clearly pointed to the possibility of an unacceptable middle ground—the middle ground of integration, of the liberal hopes that now look so naive—and so Byrd labored to eliminate it. "Dr. King," as the Imhotep said one day, "is one of the most misquoted, perspective-wise, people." Byrd talked about King's opposition to the Vietnam War, his growing stridency toward the end of his life. One day C. Vernon Mason explained that King was moving toward Pan-Africanism at the time of his death. "He was killed because he was evolving in a direction of being a person who would change the world."

On the day Dr. King's birthday was celebrated last January, the Apollo was more crowded than I'd ever seen it. Many people wanted to come to the mike to talk about Dr. King's influence on them; their words were filled not only with bitterness and dark conspiracies but with a terrible sense of vanished possibility. Who could fill that luminous space now? For a moment I deluded myself that I was hearing a yearning for the lost middle ground. An elderly man got up to tell a heartrending story of segregation in Mississippi and his own dawning consciousness. Then he said, "They never would have killed Martin if Malcolm was alive. Malcolm would have torn this country apart. And it's the same with the Reverend Farrakhan now . . ."

Martin was Malcolm: That was the real point. Another speaker, Dr. Sharshi McIntyre, said that "Martin was a warrior invoked with the spirit of his Africanness." "Malcolm was educated, but Martin was miseducated." Her manner was quicksilver, incantatory, almost breathtaking. The audience was deeply moved. Byrd summed up: "Far less separates a Martin Luther King and a Malcolm X than we have been led to believe." A

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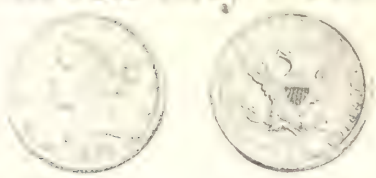
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1. D(odgers)-ARTS (anagram); 2. CRU(I)SED, anagram; 3. CAT-CHER; 4. A-IRHOLE (anagram); 5. OBVIATE, anagram; 6. R(OMAN)IA, anagram of "air"; 7. G-ROUTED; 8. DEGA(reversal)-S; 9. STEEP, two meanings; 10. SPRINGE, anagram; 11. GARDENS, anagram; 12. SCALPER, two meanings; 13. HEAVI(anagram)-L(ad)Y; 14. TARNISH, anagram; 15. DUNKERS, anagram; 16. T-ENDS; 17. PEEL-B, reversed; 18. RE-N-SLIP, reversed; 19. D-I(SOWN)S; 20. C(LASS)IC; 21. ST(ARCH)Y; 22. THRON(anagram)-GS; 23. KINDLES, anagram; 24. MIN(uet)-IE; 25. LAD-LE; 26. DOLLIES, two meanings; 27. MILDEWS, "mill dues"; 28. ODA(reversal)-L-IS-K; 29. B-ET(T)ORS, anagram; 30. S(T)INGER; 31. SAD-I-RON; 32. M-IN-OR; 33. RAKED, two meanings; 34. B(LOOM)ED; 35. MULCHED, anagram; 36. CUCKO(o)-L(a)D(y); 37. ELECTOR, anagram; 38. RE-A LIST; 39. R(O-B)ROYS, anagram; 40. ORION, hidden.

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hero had been wrested from false consciousness, from white reality, from the unbroachable suggestion of a shared destiny.

During the time that I was regularly listening to the show, the Gulf war came to crowd out almost all other obsessions. On what he called his "Power Play in the Gulf" series, Byrd brought on an array of journalists, scholars, and activists to explain that President Bush's "New World Order" was code language for global white supremacy. (Conspiracy theorists have a way of flattering the powerful by taking them more seriously than anyone else does.) There were precedents galore, and Byrd got quite hung up on a conference held by the European powers in 1884 in order to carve up Africa. It was carving time again, only now the Middle East was on the platter.

Israel was probably at the bottom of a lot of it. One day I fell into conversation with a scholarly-looking character named Richard Caillout, who said that he had written an unpublished book about Christopher Columbus, the bringer of slavery and imperialism, and an unpublished play about Nelson Mandela.

"There's only one state in that area that's expanded its borders, and that's Israel," he said. Israel was a "colonial settler state," just like South Africa. Oh, come on, I said; Israel is morally no different from South Africa? "No." At least Caillout didn't take the semi-official view that the Iraqis, as dark-skinned people, should be considered cousins rather than Visigoths. He just thought Iraq was no worse than Israel.

Meanwhile, up onstage, Betty Dopson of the Committee to Eliminate Media Offensive to African People was saying that according to a CEMOTAP poll, based on interviews with one hundred respondents in local community meetings, churches, and supermarkets, more than 80 percent of blacks opposed the war, and 87 percent didn't believe other polls saying that blacks were evenly divided on the subject. Here was a black poll designed to counter the white poll. Byrd then made a telephone call to a

Dr. Milton Morris, the vice president of research for the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, in Washington, to talk about the situation of blacks in the military. I had the feeling that something was amiss when Byrd asked Dr. Morris, with exaggerated politesse, if he would prefer using the word "black" to "African-American." Morris said that, yes, that would be more natural to him.

What about blacks in the military? Byrd asked. Morris said his research showed that "the military is the most hospitable environment in this country for people of color." Inside the Apollo there was a stunned silence such as I had never heard before. Someone in the back hooted. Morris continued, citing figures that showed blacks were twice as heavily represented in the officer corps of the various services as they had been a decade earlier.

Apparently, the good doctor had wandered in off another planet. To anyone else his findings might have seemed awfully modest, but on *The Gary Byrd Show* they seemed to threaten the whole mythic construct. Byrd didn't quite know what to do. "Of course," he said, "those numbers would have to be factored in with the issue of racism." Dr. Morris agreed as to how that might be true. Then Byrd asked his other guests if they wished to comment. Don Rojas, executive editor of the *Amsterdam News*, said, icily polite, "What do you mean by 'the military is the most hospitable . . . '?" The audience, finding an outlet for their feelings, clapped and jeered. Dr. Morris repeated his findings; I thought I heard him use the words "African-American."

The mask of courtesy on the Apollo stage began to fall away. Betty Dopson asked if Dr. Morris had surveyed the population of minorities in military prisons. Morris seemed baffled by the question, so Dopson said that she had heard that the ratio in military prison was the same as in civilian life: 80 to 85 percent black and Latino. Dr. Morris said that he had made no such study. The audience groaned in disgust. Byrd, ever smooth, launched

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The papers and television bring us daily reports about the happenings in the areas administered by Israel—Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip, and the allegedly poor treatment the Arabs receive at the hands of the Israeli authorities. Leaving the administered territories to future analysis, it is of interest to consider the status of Arab citizens in Israel proper.

What are the facts?

■ Israel is a democratic country—an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions coexist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. Seventeen per cent of the total population (700,000 people) are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the state in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

■ It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority, in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israel's Arabic press is the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region: there are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arab Middle East.

■ Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 95%, virtually the same as for Israeli Jews. There are some 700 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 200,000 students—17 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created. 90% of Arab children attend school, probably the highest ratio of any Arab population anywhere. Israeli universities and technical institutions are freely available to the Arabs. About 3,000 Arab students attend such schools.

■ All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs—Moslems, as well as many Christian denominations—are free to exercise their faiths, to observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. The holy sites of all religions are administered by their own authorities and protected by the government.

■ In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab world, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same status as men. Israeli law grants women equal rights, including the right to vote and to be elected to public office, prohibits polygamy and child marriage, and has thus vastly changed the status of women, to far above that of any country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

■ There is, however one difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli and Druze men are required to do three years of military service and then serve one month every year until they are 50. Arabs are exempted from military duty and are not required to perform any compensating civilian service. Since the surrounding Arab states, with the recent exception of Egypt, are the avowed enemies of Israel and are dedicated to its destruction, this exemption is granted by the Israeli Government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, and have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis. In summary, they enjoy the highest standards of living and liberty of any Arabs in the Middle East. It is instructive and sobering to compare the condition of the approximately 700,000 Arabs in Israel with that of the pitiful remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been living in Arab countries for almost 2000 years. Under Arab dominance, they were always third-class citizens and subject to harassment and to persecution. There were about 900,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1948—now there are fewer than 25,000. But there are now 700,000 Arabs in Israel, as against 150,000 in 1948—a more than four-fold increase. These figures alone would seem to prove that things can't be all that bad for Arabs in Israel.

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[illegible] discussion of the [illegible] then said: "That [illegible] would put an [illegible] completely different slant on [illegible] information you have offered."

"There is no credible challenge to this data," said Morris stiffly.

And so it went, a dialogue of the deaf. Dr. James McIntosh, another official from CEMOTAP, asked Morris what definition of racism he was using. Morris said that he wasn't using any definition of racism; he tried to explain the principle of scholarly objectivity. The idea was obviously alien. Rojas asked Morris what the "objective" of the study had been. Dopson asked who had been behind his funding. Byrd asked where the information had come from. I had never before heard a sharp exchange on the show; I had never seen a black man ill-treated. In every question there was the unspoken belief that Morris had committed an act of betrayal. Morris himself, perhaps as a point of intellectual pride, kept up to the very end the pretense that he was engaged in a scholarly discussion.

Byrd finally threw the microphones open. The first woman to speak was choked with rage. "I advise young people not to go into the military," she said, "because there's nothing for you there, and there's nothing for you when you come home." To my horror I saw X advancing to the other mike. "For this Dr. Tom from D.C. I got a couple of questions," he shouted. Byrd told him to cool it, but he took off on a polemical rampage anyway. A silver-haired man next to me, a photographer for the *Muslim Journal*, recoiled from the vitriol. "He's been honest," he murmured. "He's just speaking the facts." It was the guy in front of me who had said that the story of Lance Corporal Stewart proved that Morris was a stooge.

Byrd was now torn between two tenets of his show's ideology: the universality of white racism and the principle of brotherhood with all people [illegible] ally he attempted a typically polished flanking maneuver. "Where [illegible], sir."

"I would like [illegible] it is relevant."

"Are you from the Caribbean?"

"I was *born* in the Caribbean, yes." That, presumably, explained his immigrant identification with American benevolence. But Byrd wanted to lead him to another issue: If the U.S. Army and its high-ranking black officers attacked your Caribbean island, that might change your view, mightn't it? "That might be what you would call the bending of a statistic?"

"That wasn't my point at all."

"What was your point?"

"Achievement has to be taken into account when we go out and talk about how much racism there is."

My story, oddly enough, has a sort of happy ending. After I had just about had it with the nth iteration of global white supremacy and skinned cats and rats, I went back to the show one last time with two friends. As we were leaving, Melvin Green caught up with us and joined us for coffee in the Mart 125 across the street. Ever since his comment about black anger, Melvin had toed the line ideologically in our conversations. Now, over coffee, he explained to my slightly incredulous friends how the power structure had brought Arabs over to serve as shopkeepers in black neighborhoods, the better to destroy black-Arab relations; how the FBI had harassed him; how Christopher Columbus hadn't discovered America; and so on.

There was something shifting uneasily beneath the flow of Melvin's thoughts, though none of us noticed it. He turned to me and said, "I'm going to say something that's really going to shock you." I thought he meant that he was going to go off the deep end. But he said, "I've been trying to make myself hate for two years." That, he felt, was what his politics required; that was what *The Gary Byrd Show* seemed to ask of him. But it wasn't quite working. It was hard for him to take things like the Cress Theory seriously. He was looking for another way. And then Melvin began talking about, of all things, *agape*, the pure love that asks nothing in return, and about the kinship he had once felt in the military with a white soldier.

It would have been embarrassing had it not been so sincere. I thought I had known Melvin, but evidently I hadn't. He was one of those two-dimensional objects that suddenly turn to one side to reveal a third dimension. Probably he couldn't have said himself exactly what he thought. He believed the whole litany; but he didn't want to believe it. Perhaps he was in transit from it to something else. *Agape* must have sounded to Melvin like a suitably high-minded and selfless destination; but even if he was headed to someplace more secular—especially if he was—he was leaving behind the temple of received wisdom. He was looking for the middle ground. It may be that no such piece of territory exists anymore, but at least Melvin was looking. ■

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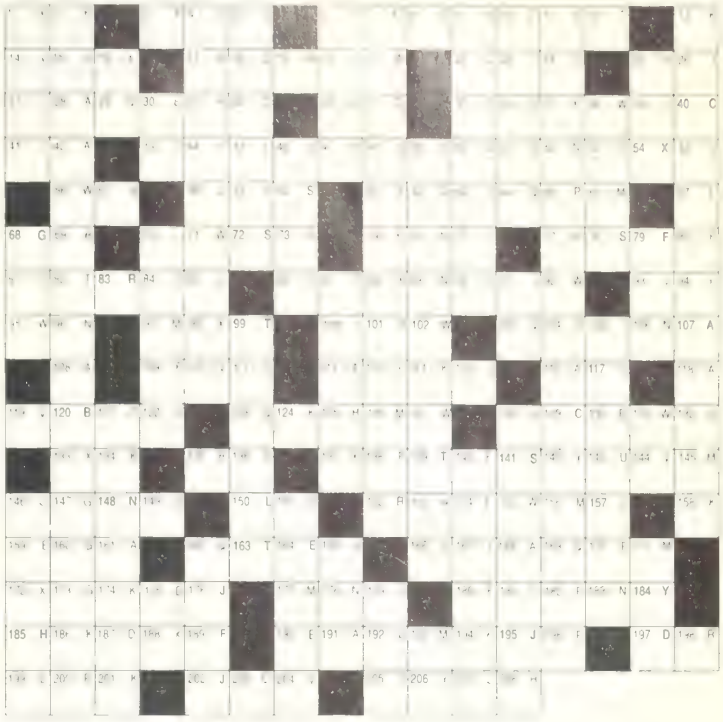
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 104

by Thomas Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: The first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 74.



CLUES

A. Shaw's flower girl (*Pygmalion*, full name) 21 118 168 49 128 42 116 33 28 153 187 112 191 161

B. Fr. painter and sculptor (1834–1917, *Fever of the Dance*) 69 130 120 135 8

C. Money set aside, as for a political campaign (2 wds.) 111 22 203 40 129 181 55 149

D. Filled with reverence, fear, wonder, etc. 81 197 11 32 205 175 192 43 187

E. Popular good-luck talisman (hyph.) 182 164 190 86 48 80 7 2 30 159 170

F. Female; maternal side of a family 189 44 79 194 140 180 109

G. Soft, white fur of a weasel 147 160 25 46 68 173

H. Judge in a Jewish religious court 77 125 208 185 31

I. Cherish as sacred 91 39 115 167 23 26 100 105

J. Fr. explorer of N. America (1643–87) 27 6 176 202 195 63 41

K. "And ——— at her council met / Who knew the seasons" (Tennyson, "To the Queen") 186 13 174 74 124 154 158 201 114

L. Exaggerates 150 45 199 20 85 166 67 70 207 157

M. Constant pessimist 193 177 171 145 97 66 156 126

N. Pounding, thumping 89 75 106 183 96 52 148 178

O. Large, dangerous shark 121 50 146 10 84 14 18 132 62 86

P. Paradoxical term, like "sweet sorrow" 53 65 196 138 179 200 8 57

Q. Please, gladden, delight 103 169 64 162 29 34 123

R. Exceed, stretch forth, extend beyond. 101 9 51 152 5 35 83 198

S. Divert, amuse; harbor 60 4 128 24 141 17 72 78 136

T. Scottish or Irish speakeasy 12 163 82 139 69 76 52

U. Crisp, lustrous, plain-woven fabric 122 143 151 117 40 88 15

V. Intensifies, increases 14 134 119 61 59 75 142 165 144

W. Faint illumination of the part of the moon not illuminated by sunlight 6 38 131 142 155 127 71 56 92 19

X. Power to remember or hold on 95 8 88 158 94 73 1 87 133 16 172

Y. Ger. [illegible] (1854–1915) 1908 Nobel Prize for medicine 142 47 184 154 94

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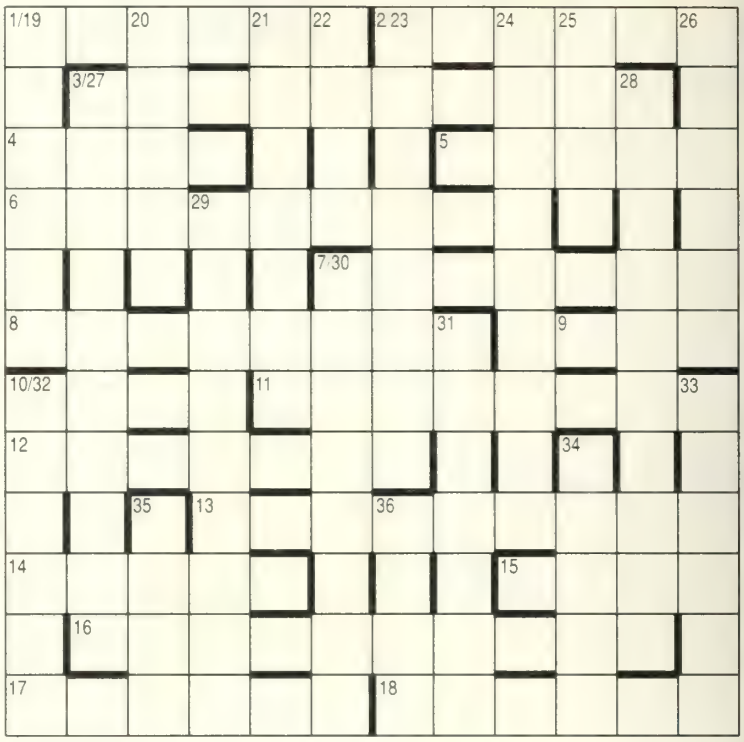
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Parting Words

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.

Clue answers are verbs, nouns, and adjectives, clued by group in the order in which they are entered in the diagram, with Across clues in sequence followed by Down clues. (For convenience, the diagram is numbered 1–18 for Across entries and 19–36 for Down entries.) There are twelve of each category, evenly divided in both Across and Down entries. Note that a word clued in one category may not necessarily be defined in the clue as belonging to that category; e.g., ROSE might be clued among the verbs, yet defined in that clue as a noun.

One of the adjectives is capitalized. The answer to last month's puzzle appears on page 74.



Verbs

a. Complete the diagram for $5, and sick about it? Just the opposite! (*two words*)
b. Head away from the cliff—head into the wind
c. Return gold in dealing with evidence of slaver
d. Made a butt of the French *pommard* initially, and daydreamed about it
e. What barfly's beginning to do!
f. Place apart is necessary for when I sleep
g. Back Long Island Conservative Party
h. I took a girl out, harboring just a hint of erotic thought
i. To pay ransom, think again?
j. Declares Reagan lightweight in public school
k. Polish purgative causes bewilderment
l. Small, almost bare pipe cleaner

Nouns

a. Parrot takes care of mole
b. When one broadcasts, send out unlimited trial returns
c. Rain on my parade? Reschedule if not, etc.
d. Particular excitement of the heart
e. Decorative artist I nearly sent off
f. Plant squash, worts, and leeks
g. He gets the money order—it bounced after $100
h. Socially precise conduct could be unpolitic
i. Beer makers pelt teachers, one hears
j. Large figure, one getting lots of love?
k. He criticizes Democrat in flag-waving conclusion of ceremony
l. Manhandle large ratchet bolt

Adjectives

a. Indicative of a women's competition in strength, daughter's beginning to pant (*hyph.*)
b. Said, this could create esprit in me
c. Hungry, heartless union man in the FBI
d. Like an early invader of Italy, old male is wearing battered baldric
e. Ornate, but without a Byzantine character
f. Look, English cathedral seen around beginning of *Vanity Fair*
g. Recall why Mao liked excerpt of *The Good Earth*
h. Somewhat unearthly approach
i. Up in the air for a moment, losing head
j. Malt beer fizzy from shaking
k. Drunk let off with fine
l. Opposed to finishing off what's in store in a fiasco

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Parting Words," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the October issue. Winners of the June puzzle, "Burden of Proof," are Scott Evans, Louisville, Kentucky; Elizabeth Barnea, Billings, Montana; and Richard Mishell, New York, New York.

September

June Tompkins: Radical Academics, In The

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH ANIMAL RIGHTS
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By Vicki Hearne

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By Lewis H. Lapham

IS LAUGHTER CONTAGIOUS?

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LETTERS

Are Children's Books So Bad?

Tom Engelhardt's essay ["Reading May Be Harmful to Your Kids," June] reminds us that we need to be skeptical of criticism implying that some genre, media, trend, or activity is "bad" for anyone, and doubly so when the alleged victims are children. Almost always, the evidence adduced is short-term and anecdotal, the conclusions drawn are sweeping in nature, and the critic's assumptions are so basic to his thought that he does not bother to mention them much less test them.

Engelhardt's essay is written by somebody who "ought to know," a former editor for a well-established imprint of a major publishing house, recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, and author of a work-in-progress about children's culture. With these credits, surely he must be an expert, thinks the unsuspecting parent, who then prepares to take Engelhardt's words to heart. (Parents most worried by this article should read histories of juvenile media, specifically books on Edward Stratemeyer, comic books, and the Oz series, in which the persistence and superficiality of Engelhardt's type of shrill alarmism can be seen as a recurrent phenomenon.)

But by what internal evidence does Engelhardt deduce that the current financial boom is deprivi children of something valuable? few bestseller lists, distorted by t removal of "the clutter of past cl sics," as if their presence on th lists is irrelevant. In support of thesis, Engelhardt implies that ch dren no longer frequent libraries a are passive recipients of the lite ture and media poured over and i their heads by grown-ups. But offers no evidence to support t implications. He ignores the la and varied literature published ev year that reaches thousands of ch dren without reaching the bestsel list. He admits that "children, c ture, and commercialism have lo been wedded" and proceeds to tell that the current state of affairs worse, but he neglects to offer a s gle fact to support his claim. All his quotes are from books; he fails show any reactions of *real, live ch dren*. Such an article is not ev anecdotal evidence but merely ass tion of unsupported opinion.

Peni R. Griffin
San Antonio

How sad but true was Tom Eng hardt's article on children's boo I've been illustrating them for m than thirty years, always hoping th my work would provoke laught curiosity, wonder, and even a bit fright. But that is becoming incre ingly difficult to do. With very f exceptions, the manuscripts I given come in two categories: eith *Johnny is lost, Mom is sad, Johnny found, Mom is happy* or *Susie is b Mom is very disappointed, Susie lea*

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the error of her ways, Mom is glad. For the record, Mom is never, never angry. Nor is anyone else. God forbid!—some child might become excited by it. I can't help but think that this dreary sameness in children's books can only result in an entire generation of dreadfully bland, unimaginative adults.

Victoria Chess
Warren, Conn.

Poor Tom Engelhardt! His concern with the state of children's literature is entirely wasted. I am a reading teacher, and in my experience, teaching children to read all the words in the English language is a pain in the neck. Vocabulary lists alone will not do the job. It helps a lot if the kid is given something whose pages he or she wants to turn. I'm afraid that *Tom Sawyer* is not the answer—not the *only* answer. Engelhardt's worry is that children will read mediocre books and never graduate to adult classics, only to adult genre trash. But not all my peers who gobbled up the Nancy Drew series went on to read *The Brothers Karamazov*. Some are reading bodice-buster romances to this day. That will happen to this generation too. Only a rather small percentage will journey to the Harvard Classics shelf. But by learning how to read and to enjoy reading, the child will develop the skill necessary to someday get through Stephen King or *War and Peace*, whichever he or she chooses.

Travis Forsyth Sherman
St. Petersburg, Fla.

Once upon a time, a disgruntled man decided he would slay the fire-breathing, child-eating dragon he knew to be children's-book publishing. With immeasurable fortitude, he approached the beast, brandishing only a bestseller list of juvenile books that he'd torn from a magazine. The savage saurian gingerly plucked the page from her adversary's hand and stroked her scaly chin as she read its contents. Then the dragon admonished the disgruntled man for his inadequate research: "Shame on you, Tom Engelhardt, for unfairly predicating your negative assessment of the entire children's-book industry merely upon a juvenile bestseller list!" She ignited the cuffs of his pants with a tongue of fire. "Get a library card and you too might live happily ever after," she called to him in the distance, before settling down with a good book.

Monica Corcoran
New York City

Sons and Daughters and Sports

Scott Russell Sanders's essay "Fathers, Sons, Sports" [Readings, June] moved me with its eloquent description of the physical and spiritual rewards of sports. He appropriately places the moments of grace we achieve through our athletic skills among the great joys of being alive. His description of dwelling in

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the body and experiencing its other way of knowing captures the essence of sports.

At the same time, I was infuriated by Sanders's fundamental connection between these transcendent experiences and the male gender. All of his wonderful prose supports the premise that sports are part of a man's legacy to his son. But women also "struggle lifelong to dwell in the flesh without rancor, without division between act and desire." Millions of women achieve this through sports—and not by playing music or making bread. Like Sanders and his son, I spent a good portion of my childhood lost in the motions of throwing a tennis ball at a garage door. Recently I taught my ten-year-old nephew how to fake out a defender in soccer and how to catch a fly ball. I hope to pass these and other secrets on to my own children—sons and daughters.

If Sanders has a daughter, I hope he passes his love of sports on to her too. I hope he teaches her to experience what he so carefully describes—that "momentary wholeness," those "lessons in immortality," to live "the sweet and sweaty thing itself." Women have too long been separate from their bodies, kept out of reach from an extraordinary realm of human experience.

Susanna Levin
San Francisco

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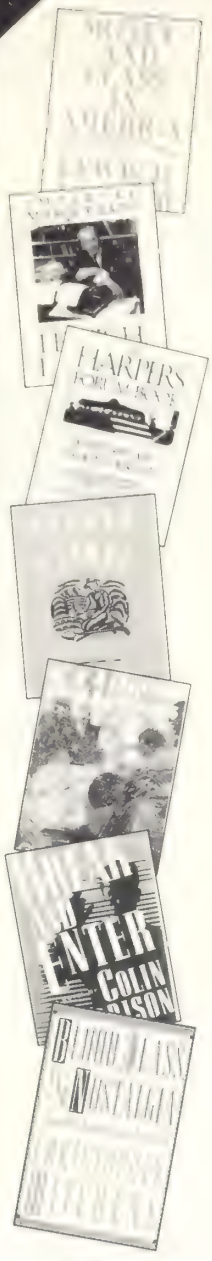
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NOTEBOOK

Justice Horatio Alger

By Lewis H. Lapham

One can always be kind to people [illegible] one cares nothing.

Oscar Wilde

The Republican Party has a talent for turning politics into puppet theater, and by next spring I expect that we can look forward to seeing the figure of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas dancing in the strings once occupied by Willie Horton. The modern American presidential election apparently requires the presence of a representative black man who can be made to carry the party message and sing the company song. In 1988 the Republicans presented a Victorian melodrama, and they cast the black man as the villain of the tale. Rapists and murderous bandits were said to be roaming the streets, a good many of them presumably free on bail raised by Democratic politicians and gorging themselves on the feast of public welfare. Enter Willie Horton, a convict on leave, grim-faced and barely literate, guilty of vicious crimes, and a man in whom the electorate could recognize the embodiment of its easiest fear. The Republican stage managers supplied the words and the music, and for two months on the nation's television screens Willie danced the dance of death.

But that was three years ago, before the glorious war in Iraq under the direction of General Colin Powell proved to the American audience the strength of its mercenary army, and before the Los Angeles police department demonstrated its capacity to keep the peace on the marches of the Foothill Freeway. If the electorate no longer doubts the [illegible] as blithely as possible [illegible] the ungrateful poor (whether in Western Asia or East St. Louis), I advise it is time to talk about rewards instead of punishments. If the Republicans wish to show themselves alert to the idiom of multiculturalism, they need a new black man to tell a new and friendly story. Enter Judge Clarence Thomas, dressed in a button-down shirt and living in an expensive Virginia suburb, a graduate of Yale Law School, an admirer of corporate finance and an apostle for the authority of the state. Horatio Alger in blackface.

If the political fables seem too cynical or too simple-minded, consider the way in which President Bush introduced Judge Thomas to the television cameras at Kennebunkport on July 1, only four days after Justice Thurgood Marshall unexpectedly resigned from the Court for reasons of infirmity and age. Instead of talking about Judge Thomas's understanding of the law, Mr. Bush told the story of his successful career. He might as well have been writing a letter of recommendation to the admissions committee at Augusta National or the Council on Foreign Relations. Behold, said President Bush, an excellent black man who had achieved his success without resort to liberal politics or the federal dole. The President began by saying—categorically and without further explanation—that Judge Thomas "is the best person for this position." He then proceeded to list the judge's schools and his scholarships, his service as a legislative assistant to Senator John Danforth of Missouri, his eight-year term as a federal bureaucrat under the tutelage of Ronald Reagan and the American Enterprise Institute, his appointment, in 1990, to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. After praising Judge Thomas as a "delightful and warm, intelligent person who has great empathy and a wonderful sense of humor," Mr. Bush concluded his endorsement with an inspired non sequitur. "Judge Thomas's life," he said, "is a model for all Americans, and he's earned the right to sit on this nation's highest court."

The two clauses have nothing to do with each other. By virtue of the same false syllogism, the President could easily have submitted the name of Ken Griffey Jr. or Michael Jordan or Arsenio Hall. Logic, of course, was irrelevant. So were the questions pertaining to the judge's wisdom or experience. Had the judge been white or green or blue, he would have had as little chance of sitting on the Supreme Court or standing in front of the cameras at Kennebunkport as Kevin Costner or Nolan Ryan.

Judge Thomas responded on key and in kind. He presented himself as an exemplary proof of the coming to pass of the American Dream, and his remarks could have served as an acceptance of an Academy Award. Instead of talking about the nature of the office for which he had been nominated, about the weight of the law or his countrymen's hopes of justice, he thanked the wonderful cast that "helped me to this point and this moment in my life—especially my grandparents, my mother, and the nuns, all of whom were adamant that I grow up to make something of myself. I also thank my wonderful wife and my wonderful son." The judge glistened with egoism (seldom a good sign in a magistrate), but he spoke with tears in his voice, and the effect enhanced the photo opportunity.

For the next half hour the reporters in attendance on the lawn of the summer White House tried to ask hard questions. Was the appointment as cynical as it seemed?

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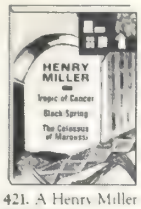
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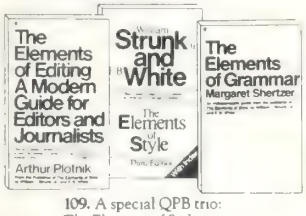
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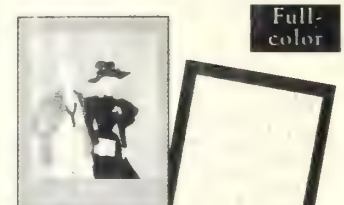
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Wasn't it true that Mr. Bush was trafficking in racial quotas? Wouldn't it be fair to say that in any other venue of the federal government Judge Thomas's nomination would be classified as an "affirmative action hire"?

None of the questions troubled the surface of the President's serene hypocrisy. No, he said, the nomination had nothing to do with racial preference. He had chosen Judge Thomas strictly on the basis of merit, and he didn't see "even an appearance of an inconsistency" with his previously stated opposition to the use of quotas. His denials were as condescending as they were dishonest.

> QUESTION: Was race a factor whatsoever, sir?
>
> PRESIDENT BUSH: I don't see it at all. The fact that he's a minority, you've heard his testimony, the kind of life he's had, and I think that speaks eloquently for itself.

The President rested his case on the biography, "on the kind of life he's had," and he left it to the press or the Democratic Party to muster the courage to attack the story of a poor black boy born in a Georgia slum, deserted by his father at the age of seven, who learned his letters from Catholic nuns, and who, by dint of his spiritual faith and moral effort, triumphed over the evil of segregation and went on to win fame and fortune in the imperial city that was Ronald Reagan's Washington.

The story was so good ("suckled by wolves; rescued by nuns") that the President didn't need to bother with more than a brief glance at Judge Thomas's prior thought and writing. The newspaper accounts suggest that he considered only one other name for the Court (Judge Emilio M. Garza of Texas) and that he reached his decision during a lull in his Saturday golf game. On Monday Judge Thomas was brought to Maine in an Air Force plane. The President granted him a brief audience (about twenty minutes in the presidential bedroom) and then, after lunch on the veranda (with Mrs. Bush and a few of the President's

senior advisers), presented him, like a prize fish, to the national media.

The President looked to be well pleased with himself. By nominating a black man to Justice Thurgood Marshall's seat on the Supreme Court, he had made what must have seemed to him a very deft and very clever move in the opening phase of the 1992 presidential campaign. If Judge Thomas didn't espouse Justice Marshall's liberal views (if, in fact, he was a doctrinaire conservative best known for his liege man's service to the mean-spirited bias that Marshall detested), well, then, too bad, and so much the worse for the adherents of the hated L word. Let the civil rights people bitch and moan and whine; let the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People worry about finding its way out of the maze of conflicted feelings. Overly sensitive advocates of racial justice had asked Bush for a black man, and he had given them a black man, and if they didn't like what they got, they could tell their troubles to Oprah Winfrey or the moon. The President's self-satisfaction expressed his contempt for the world of black political theory.

Together with his exemplary life, Judge Thomas possessed the attribute of a near perfect (and therefore blameless) silence on most of the principal issues likely to come before the Supreme Court. At the age of forty-three, he was one of the two youngest judges named to the Supreme Court in the last century (the other was Justice William O. Douglas). Because Judge Thomas had served on the Appellate Court in Washington for no longer than fifteen months, he hadn't yet had the chance to hand down any notable decisions, and because his published writings were so few (occasional journal articles and newspaper op-ed page pieces), he could be described as a man of few known opinions.

What he was known for was his bureaucrat's hostility toward the messy emotions associated with human and civil rights. In 1982 President Reagan had appointed Judge Thomas chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and for the next seven years the judge faithfully opposed the reckless and irresponsible use of the affirmative action laws. Together with a number of other black conservatives loyal to the Reagan cause, Judge Thomas beat the drum for the grand old Republican doctrines of individual initiative and free enterprise. Much of his own education had been paid for with government money, and he owed his career to racial preference and political patronage. But, like President Bush, he apparently didn't see any inconsistency between his ideological opposition to racial quotas and his dependence on those same quotas for his admission to Yale Law School.

For eight years the Reagan administration conducted a systematic assault against almost any civil right or civil liberty that anybody could name. Of the corruption so evidently in office during the 1980s, Thurgood Marshall once said, "I wouldn't do the job of dog catcher for Ronald Reagan." His likely successor on the Supreme Court doesn't permit himself so impolitic a view of things; over almost the whole of his career he remained as quiet as any other well-behaved functionary determined "to make it on his own." Senator Orrin G. Hatch of Utah predicted an easy confirmation in the Senate. "This man [Thomas] understands the difficulties of life. He has had a tough life, but he's made it all the way. Anybody who takes him on in the area of civil rights is taking on the grandson of a sharecropper."

Again, as with President Bush's encomium, it was the story of the life, not the temper of the thought, that defined Judge Thomas's place in the Republican puppet theater. It didn't matter whether he was made of straw or wood. The conservative scene painters and costume designers delighted in the task of furnishing the ideological decor. Writing in the *Washington Post*, the columnist George Will discovered in Judge Thomas a character who "could have stepped from the pages of those novels 19th-century readers

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HARPER'S INDEX

Estimated annual cost of the redundant tests prescribed by U.S. doctors to avoid malpractice suits : $15,000,000,000

Chances that a patient admitted to a hospital will leave with a disabling injury as a direct result of treatment : 1 in 25

Chances that a heart surgeon earns more than $600,000 a year : 1 in 5

Number of New York City garment workers who earn less than the minimum wage : 10,000

Percentage of the business loans made in the United States last year that were made by foreign-owned banks : 30

Price of a two-ounce bottle of Recession, a cologne, at Bloomingdale's : $22.50

Total number of the U.S. government's 3 million employees who were fired last year for poor performance : 290

Number of Southerners in positions of leadership in the Democratic House caucus : 0

Chances that a Democrat cannot name anyone "mentioned lately" as a 1992 Democratic presidential candidate : 3 in 4

Amount the Republican Party was fined in April for illegally giving $2,700,000 to Senate candidates in 1986 : $24,000

Rank of Washington, D.C., high school students, among students with the lowest mathematics scores nationwide : 1

Rank of Washington, D.C., high school students, among those most likely to say they are "good in math" : 1

Percentage of business students at American universities who admit to having cheated on an exam : 57

Percentage of farmers who say they'd "do nothing" if they learned their pesticide tank was spilling into a creek : 9

Percentage who say they'd "wait and see if a problem developed" : 19

Average number of weeks it took the poultry industry to produce a full-grown chicken in 1940 : 12

Average number of weeks it takes today : 6

Chances that a chicken sold in a supermarket is infected with salmonella : 1 in 3

Number of children admitted to hospital emergency rooms last year for injuries involving shopping carts : 32,866

Number of live hand grenades thrown from moving cars in Chicago in the last year : 4

Estimated life expectancy of an automotive crash-test dummy, in crashes : 30

Estimated number of birds that are killed in collisions with TV broadcast towers each year : 1,250,000

Number of reported cases of epileptic seizure brought on by the voice of *Entertainment Tonight* co-host Mary Hart : 1

Percentage of the references to male tennis players made by TV sportscasters that use the player's first name only : 8

Percentage of the references to female tennis players that do : 53 [see page 38]

Number of breast implants performed on teenage American girls last year : 1,000

Number of the 100 buttock implants performed in the United States last year that were done in California : 92

Estimated number of bear gallbladders consumed in Hong Kong each year : 600

Weight of the ovarian cyst removed in May from a West Virginia woman, in pounds : 180

Number of vasectomies given away on Mother's Day last year by WKQQ, a Lexington, Kentucky, radio station : 1

Value of the prizes won by Tom Sedivy of California, in the 95 radio call-in contests he won last year : $50,000

Estimated number of unsolicited phone calls made by U.S. telemarketers each second : 200

Percentage of American women who say they have listened in on their husband's phone calls : 28

Percentage of American mothers who say they have searched their child's room : 43

Chances that a single American man between the ages of 25 and 34 lives with one or both parents : 1 in 3

Percentage of Americans who say their best friend is their father : 0

Percentage of Fortune 1000 companies that offer paternity leave : 31

Percentage of eligible American men who take paternity leave : 1

Percentage of employed Americans who say they are considering "quitting work entirely" : 12

Percentage of Americans who when asked to name their favorite day of the week say they "dislike them all" : 3

Figures cited are the latest available as of July 1991. Sources are listed on page 80.
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READINGS

[Open Letter]

NO MORE RACE POLITICS, MR. PRESIDENT

From a speech delivered by New Jersey senator Bill Bradley on the Senate floor on July 10.

In 1988, Mr. President, you used the Willie Horton ad to appeal to fear and divide white and black voters. Judging from your recent remarks about the 1991 civil rights bill, you have begun to do the same thing again. But I implore you—don't go back down that path. Racial tension is too dangerous to exploit. Continued progress in race relations won't be helped by the use of code words and a grasping for an early advantage in the 1992 election; it requires moral leadership and a clear-sighted understanding of our national self-interest. And that must start with our president.

Mr. President, you say you're against discrimination. At West Point you said you "will strike at discrimination wherever it exists." If you truly want to heal the division between the races, why don't you back up your statement with actions? Why don't you spend some of the political capital represented by your 70 percent approval rating and try to move our glacial collective humanity one inch forward?

You might begin by telling us how you have worked through the issue of race in your own life. I don't mean speechwriter abstractions about equality or liberty but your own life experiences. When did you first realize that there was a difference between the lives of black people and the lives of white people in America? Where did you ever experience or see discrimination? How did you feel? What did you do?

If our concerns are unfounded, please dispel them. Please address the following sources of our doubt:

Doubt One: Your record. Back in 1964, when you were running for the Senate, you opposed the Civil Rights Act. Why?

I remember that summer. I was a student intern in Washington, D.C., between my junior and senior years in college, and I was in this Senate chamber that hot summer night when the bill passed. I remember the roll call. I remember thinking, "America is a better place because of this bill. All Americans—white and black—are better off." I remember the presidential election that summer too, when Senator Goldwater made his opposition to the Civil Rights Act an important part of his campaign. I came to Washington that summer as a Republican. I left a Democrat.

Why did you oppose that bill? Why did you say that the 1964 Civil Rights Act "violates the constitutional rights of all people"? Do you remember the way that many parts of our country functioned before it passed? Separate rest rooms and drinking fountains for blacks and whites, blacks turned away from hotels,

restaurants, movies. Did you believe that black Americans should eat at the kitchen steps of restaurants, not in the dining room? Whose constitutional rights were being violated there?

Did you oppose the Civil Rights Act just for political purposes? Were you using race to get votes? Did you ever change your mind and regret your opposition to the Civil Rights Act? If so, when? Did you ever express your regret publicly? What regrets do you have?

Doubt Two: Economic reality. Mr. President, during the last eleven years of Republican rule the poor and the middle class in America have not fared well. The average middle-income family earned $31,000 in 1977 (in current dollars) and $31,000 in 1990—no improvement. During the same time period, the richest 1 percent of American families went from earning $280,000 to $549,000. How could that have happened? How could the majority of voters have supported administrations whose primary achievement was to make the rich richer? The answer lies in the strategy and tactics of recent political campaigns.

I CAN'T ACCEPT INFLAMING RACIAL TENSION TO PERPETUATE POWER—AND THEN USING THAT POWER TO REWARD THE RICH AND IGNORE THE POOR

To make sure that middle-class Americans wouldn't clearly see their economic interests, Republicans interjected race into campaigns; they set out to play on new fears and old prejudices, to drive a wedge through the middle class, to pry off a portion large enough to win.

Most Americans recognize that in economic policy Republicans have traditionally sought to reward the rich; Democrats have not. I accept that as part of the lore and debate and rhythm of American politics. What I can't accept, because it eats at the core of our society, is inflaming racial tension to perpetuate power and then using that power to reward the rich and ignore the poor. It is a reasonable argument about means to say that giving the wealthy more is the price we pay to "lift all boats." It is cynical manipulation to send messages to white working people that they have more in common with the wealthy than with the black workers next to them on the line, people taking the same physical risks, earning the same pay, struggling to make ends meet. I detest anyone who uses that tactic—whether it is a Democrat like George Wallace or a Republican like David Duke.

The irony is that most of the people who, because of race, voted for George Wallace or David Duke or George Bush haven't benefited economically in the last decade. Many of them are worse off. Many have lost jobs, health insurance, pension benefits. Many more can't buy a house or pay property taxes or hope to send their child to college. Put bluntly, Mr. President, why shouldn't we doubt your commitment to racial justice and fair play when we see who has benefited most from the power that has been acquired through sowing the seeds of racial division?

Doubt Three: Your inconsistent words. Most Americans who have absorbed our history know the wisdom of Zora Neale Hurston's words: "Race is an explosive on the tongues of men." Race is most especially an explosive on the President's tongue—or on the tongues of his men. We need to be led, not manipulated. Yet you have tried to turn the Willie Horton code of 1988 into the quota code of 1992. You have told us that's not what you're doing, but, as you yourself said at West Point, "You can't put a sign on a pig and say it's a horse."

Why do you say one thing with your statement against discrimination and do something else with your opposition to American businesses that are working with civil rights groups to pass a civil rights bill most Americans could be proud of? Are you sending mixed signals or are you giving a big wink to a segment of the electorate?

We measure our leader by what he says and by what he does. If both what he says and what he does destroy racial harmony, we must conclude that he wants to destroy racial harmony. If what he says and what he does are different, then what he does is more important. If at different times he says different things that are contradictory, then we must conclude he's trying to pull the wool over our eyes.

Doubt Four: Your leadership. By the year 2000, only 57 percent of people entering the U.S. work force will be native-born whites. White Americans have to understand that their children's standard of living is inextricably bound up with the future of the millions of nonwhite children who will pour into the work force in the upcoming decades. Guiding them toward achievement will make America a richer, more successful society. Allowing them to self-destruct will make America a second-rate power. Black Americans have to believe that the acquisition of skills will give them entry into society not because they have achieved a veneer of whiteness but because they are able.

Both races have to learn to speak candidly with each other. To do that we must trust each other. There is much to say to each other



"Storm," by Hans Haacke, a New York City artist, in the July 15/22 issue of The Nation, *a special issue on patriotism. In a note accompanying the photo, Haacke explains that "Storm" consists of a "beat-up shopping cart (missing one wheel), flags kept in hysterical motion by motorized mechanism, remote control."*

about rage and patience, about opportunity and obligation, about fear and courage, about guilt and honor. The more Americans are honest about the level of distrust they hold for one another, the easier it will be to get beyond those feelings and forge a new relationship.

The most important voice in the national dialogue is yours, Mr. President. You can set us against each other or you can bring us together. You can reason with us and help us overcome deep-rooted stereotypes or you can speak in contradictory sound bites and leave us at each other's throats. You can push the buttons that you think win elections—or you can challenge a nation's moral conscience.

Doubt Five: Your convictions. As vice president to Ronald Reagan you were a loyal lieutenant. To my knowledge you never publicly expressed opposition to anything that happened regarding race relations during the Reagan years. The Reagan Justice Department tried to give government tax subsidies to schools that practice racial discrimination as a matter of policy. And you went along. They resisted renewing the Voting Rights Act—and you went along. For eight years there was an assault on American civility and fair play—and you went along. On what issue would you have spoken out? Was your role as vice president more important than any conviction?

Mr. President, you watched black America fall deeper and deeper into decline during the Reagan years. From 1984 to 1988, the number of black children murdered in America increased by 50 percent. Today, 43 percent of black children are born in poverty. And since 1984 black life expectancy has declined—the first decline for any segment of America's population in our history. Yet in the face of these unprecedented developments, you said and did nothing. Why did you go along?

Maybe you have no idea what to do about kids killing kids in our cities and people sleeping on the streets. Maybe out-of-wedlock births are outside your experience and not of importance to you. Maybe for you, the idea of family doesn't encompass white and black families living in cities, struggling to make ends meet against the same high odds that you refuse to reduce. Maybe you just don't understand. Maybe, maybe, maybe.

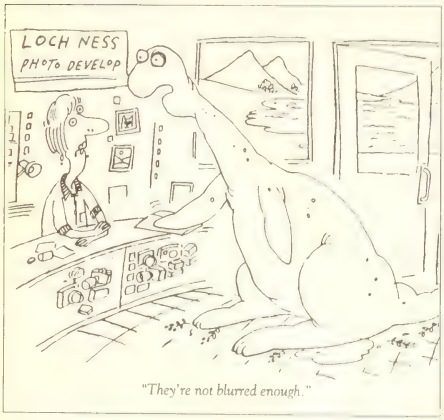
Who knows? We rarely hear your voice. At West Point, you exhorted America to be "color-blind." But without doing something

about inequity and poverty, the call for color blindness amounts to little more than denial and arrogance. Mr. President, you first have to create a context in which a color-blind society can evolve.

Mr. President, as you and your men dabble in race politics, consider these facts: We will never win the global economic race if we have to carry the burden of a growing unskilled population. We will never lead the world by the example of our values if we can't eradicate the "reservation" mentality many whites hold about our cities. We will never come to grips with the problems of our cities—the factories closing, the housing filled with rats, the hospitals losing doctors, the schools pockmarked with bullet holes, the middle class in flight—until a white person can talk about the epidemic of minority illegitimacy, drug addiction, and homicides without being called a racist. We will never solve the problem of our cities until we intervene massively and directly to change the physical conditions of poverty and deprivation. But you can still win elections by playing on the insecurities that people feel about their jobs, their homes, their children, and their future. And so our greatest doubt about you is this: Is winning elections more important to you than unifying the country so that together we can address the problems of race and poverty that beset us?

Mr. President, I'm asking you to take the issue of race out of partisan politics and put it on a moral plane where healing can take place. For this to happen, you need to tell us what you plan to do about the issues of race and poverty in this country. Tell us why our legitimate doubts about your convictions are wrong. Tell us how you propose to make us the example of a pluralist democracy whose economy and spirit takes everyone to a higher ground.

Tell each of us what we can do. Tell us why you think we can do it. Tell us why we *must* do it. Tell us, Mr. President. Lead us. Put yourself on the line. Now. Now.



"They're not blurred enough."

From Punch.

[Questionnaire]

IN SEARCH OF NORIEGA'S PEERS

From the questionnaire to be given to prospective jurors at the trial of Manuel Noriega on drug-trafficking charges. The questions, drafted by defense and government lawyers, will be used to identify potential jurors who might be biased. The trial, which will be held in the U.S. District Court in Miami, is scheduled to begin in September.

1. Have you ever been employed by, associated with, or known anyone who was employed by or associated with any of the following organizations? (Check all that apply.)

a. M-19 ___
b. Mossad ___
c. The Contras ___

2. Do you or does any member of your immediate family know how to operate a boat?

Yes ___ No ___

a. If yes, specify what type of boat(s) and whether it is (was) used for business or pleasure.

3. Do you or does any member of your immediate family know how to fly an airplane?

Yes ___ No ___

a. If yes, specify the type of aircraft you or your family member flies, whether it is for business or pleasure, and whether you or your family member has a pilot's license.

4. Do you have any experiences, beliefs, or feelings that could influence you in a case involving the alleged distribution of large quantities of cocaine?

Yes ___ No ___

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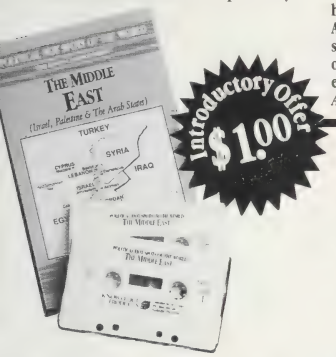
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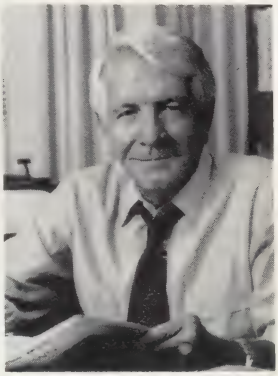
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a. If yes, please explain.

_____

[illegible] you, a close friend, or a family member ever had a negative experience with a person involved with or on drugs?

Yes ___ No ___

6. Do you think that the use of cocaine is a serious social problem?

Yes ___ No ___

7. Do you think that drugs should be legalized?

Yes ___ No ___

a. If yes, which drug or drugs do you think should be legalized and why?

_____

_____

8. Have you read any book or other material about any country in South or Central America?

Yes ___ No ___

a. If yes, specify author and title, if you remember.

_____

_____

9. Have you read any material or seen any programs about the operation of any United States intelligence agency?

Yes ___ No ___

a. If yes, specify the material and/or program(s).

_____

_____

10. Do you watch any of the following programs? (Check all that apply.)

60 Minutes ___ *20/20* ___ *Nightline* ___
Frontline ___ *America's Most Wanted* ___
Other news/docudrama show
_____(specify)

11. Have you ever heard of Manuel Antonio Noriega?

Yes ___ No ___

12. If you have heard of or read about any of the following individuals, place a check mark next to each person you have heard of or read about.

___ George Bush
___ Manuel Noriega
___ Elliott Abrams
___ Edwin Meese
___ Eric Delvalle
___ Robert McFarlane
___ John Poindexter
___ Oliver North
___ Admiral Daniel Murphy
___ George Shultz
___ Ronald Reagan
___ Philip Habib
___ Fidel Castro

[Interview]

TODAY'S ROCK-RIBBED REPUBLICAN

From an interview with Massachusetts governor William Weld in the June 16 Boston Globe. *Weld, a Republican, was elected governor in 1990. The interview was conducted by Mark Feeney, a* Globe *editor.*

Q: Last year you told the *Boston Phoenix* that you don't like Motown and that you're a Dead Head. Would you like to share with our readers your rock and roll history?

A: You know, I was listening to the radio two days ago, and they played a song by my very favorite recording artist of all time, whom I'd forgotten to mention in that interview. It's Dave Mason, when he went solo, after he'd split off from [Steve] Winwood and [Jim] Capaldi in Traffic.

Q: What are some of your other rock and roll likes and dislikes?

A: Oh, Traffic. Possibly my favorite single record was by a group called Seatrain—I don't know if you know them, they were trained operatically, a lot of violin on top—the album with "Waiting for Elijah," "Thirteen Questions," "Outwear the Hills."

I like the Stones around the period of *Between the Buttons*. My favorite Stones album is the *British* version of *Between the Buttons*, which does not have "Ruby Tuesday" or "Let's Spend the Night Together" on it but does instead have "Connection," a *tremendous* Stones song that they never play. I know Jagger is the idol and Richards is his sidekick, but I think when Brian Jones was fetched up from the bottom of the pool, the Stones lost their musical-spiritual leader.

Q: Was there a time when you felt yourself losing touch with rock and roll? It seems as though it's the earlier groups that you—

A: Well, I've said I don't like the Stones after *Exile on Main Street*, and I don't. I don't even like the album *Steel Wheels*, which everyone went bananas over. It wasn't melodic enough for me. I liked Creedence a great deal, but I suppose that's back around '69, '70. Of the more recent music, I like Warren Zevon, I like Elvis Costello, but not all their stuff. Oh, I'll tell you who I had a great fling with: David Byrne and Talking Heads—the song whose title I can never remember but the words are


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[Calendar]

THE KING AND I



The pictures above are from a 1991 Elvis Presley calendar altered by David James Sibbitt, a Tampa, Florida, artist. Sibbitt painted over each month's picture of Elvis to create images that bear a strong resemblance to himself. The remade calendar is on display at the Lieberman & Saul Gallery in New York City this month.

"This is not my beautiful house..."

Q: "Once in a Lifetime."

A: "Once in a Lifetime." I used to come home—I forget whether it was when I was U.S. Attorney or at Hill & Barlow—and I'd put on that record every single night.

Q: You're one of those people who went to see *The Harder They Come* at the Welles back in the early Seventies.

A: Yeah, oh yeah. The year 1974—my Washington year—was dominated by a Jimmy Cliff album. Sure, I went to see *The Harder They Come*, absolutely. I can't remember much about it except that I was in seventh heaven because I loved the music so much.

Q: One last question. Who was your favorite Beatle?

A: Let's do it by process of elimination. It's not going to be Ringo. George was the best guitarist, but his solo albums are a little soupy for me. A lot of McCartney's music—although I think he's a great talent—is too saccharine for me. That leaves Lennon. He was the most revolutionary. He put more zip into it than anyone else. But that's from a process of elimination. He didn't leap out at me. If you asked me about the Stones, I'd say Brian Jones [snaps his fingers], right there.

Q: So in the Beatles/Stones debate?

A: Oh, I'm a Stones man.

[Program]

SLEEP, WHERE IS THY STING?

This program was distributed to members of the audience prior to performances of The Sting Dreams, *by Tina Lhotsky, at the Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center in Venice, California, in June. During her performance, Lhotsky lounged on a brass bed while recounting dreams in which Sting, the rock star, had appeared. Lhotsky, a writer and actress, lives in Los Angeles.*

THE STING DREAMS

Starring: Sting

Cast of Characters: Tina Lhotsky, Uma Thurman, Pia Zadora, William Hurt, metallic orange cockroach, Mark Rovelli, Robin Kormos, the cast of *Star Trek*, Trudie Styler, the ancient Druids, a gang of black thieves, Sting's

children, Edith Piaf, a maze of rooms, a cabaret hall, a room on a train, a receptionist's desk, a city park, Paris, London, New York, a hidden mansion, a hotel suite, the bank of the East River, a swimming-pool movie set, an art gallery, an elevator in a hotel lobby, Sting's New York apartment, the Akashic records, the astral levitators, the finer planes, the Earth plane, a New York loft, the depths of my subconscious.

The Dreams

First Sting Dream	Late Fall, 1986
Sting Is a Hologram in My Subconscious	1986, 1987, 1988
After the Performance	Nov. 11, 1989
I Am a Journalist and Sting Waits for Me	Dec. 2, 1989
The Photo Session in the Art Gallery	Dec. 7, 1989
Filming Exotic Beauty in the Swimming Pool	Dec. 12, 1989
Sting and I Are Proletariats	Dec. 18, 1989
New York Loft Party	Dec. 23, 1989
Trudie Thinks Sting Is Complex	Jan. 2, 1990
Sting and I Get Closer	Jan. 7, 1990
The Walk in the City Park	Feb. 18, 1990
Initiation in Olde Druidic England	March 3, 1990
Sting Entertains in His New York Home	June 22, 1990
Sting Performs His Schoolteacher Song	July 2, 1990
The Book of Sting	Late Summer, 1990
The Metallic Cockroach and Pia Zadora's Attempted Suicide	Sept. 1, 1990
Leaving Sting's Life —I Try to Come to His Rescue	Sept. 19, 1990
Sting's Sacred Writing and the Astral Levitators	Late Sept., 1990
Sting's Children in the Beat Cafe, Singing a Duet With Sting	Oct. 16, 1990
The Meaning of the Dreams Are Revealed to Me	Early Dec., 1990
Sting and I Appear in Old Episodes of *Star Trek*	Dec. 23, 1990
Sting's Secret Country Mansion	Feb. 2, 1991
The Laughing Dog	March 25, 1991

[Press Release]

BORN TO BE MILD

From the "Consolidated 1991 Biography," a press release distributed by I.R.S. Records. Consolidated's latest album, Friendly Fascism, was released last spring.

In the spring of 1990 Consolidated released *The Myth of the Rock*, an introduction to the band's music and ideology that employed several current musical styles: rock, hip-hop, industrial, noise, techno, media bites, etc. The group clearly stated its opposition to racism, homophobia, jingoism, animal cruelty, and fascist tendencies in the entertainment realm. Its unconditional support for women's equality (political, economic, and reproductive) set it far apart from those in all music genres who have long upheld an overwhelmingly sexist tradition in entertainment.

For the better part of 1990 Consolidated toured extensively, mostly in North America but also in Europe. This intense touring brought the realization that the oppressive nature of live rock performance defeated the group's intention of creating a potentially democratic atmosphere. This in turn inspired Consolidated to add a new and critical feature to its performance: At each show the group invites the audience to take part by voicing comments, criticisms, questions, and clarifications. Opinions can be directed at the band or at anyone else attending the concert, and the subject matter is entirely dictated by the audience. In an era when entertainment has become a violent sensory assault with no opportunity for reflection, Consolidated feels this open discussion is a necessary interactive component of the overall Consolidated presentation.

Their new release, *Friendly Fascism*, produced by Consolidated and mixed by Jack Dangers (Meat Beat Manifesto), further expands the concepts charted in *Myth*. The group's appeal for solidarity among all oppressed groups and communities is shown in the song "Unity of Oppression," and their commitment to vegetarianism as a politicized and ethical activity is illustrated in both "Meat Kills" and "The Sexual Politics of Meat." In "Typical Male" and "White American Male II" the embarrassing self-examination and critical perspective of patriarchal hegemony is updated for '91.

[Sightings]

SHOPS WITH MORTALS

From sightings of Kevin Costner published last spring in the Dallas Morning News. *The paper began its Kevin Watch column in April, when the actor arrived in Dallas to star in Oliver Stone's forthcoming film,* JFK; *"Costner-gazers" called in spottings to the paper's Kevin Watch hot line.*

I saw Kevin Costner last night at the 7-Eleven on Midway and 635, and he was buying Scotch tape and a Cherry Cola Slurpee, and I was in line right behind him, and it cost $2.02, and I immediately pulled out two cents when I saw that and gave it to him so that he could have exact change, and I was pretty happy about that. It was midnight, so I don't know what he was doing buying Scotch tape.

—Dudley Green

My friend and I saw Kevin on Saturday at 1:00 P.M. at Taco Cabana on Lemmon. He was ordering three bean-and-cheese tacos and an order of chips and chili con queso. He was wearing faded Levi's, a white T-shirt, and a leather bomber jacket. He looked fine. I wanted to ask him if he could introduce me to Tom Cruise, but my friend wouldn't let me.

—Linda and Kathy, "The Roving CPAs"

I saw him at about eleven-thirty or a quarter to twelve at a pizza place, Dallas Upper Crust Pizza on Throckmorton, eating with a guy named Glen. I think it's his driver; they came in a little car. They've been there about forty-five minutes. He's wearing some jeans and a white T-shirt with a jacket that has a *Ghost* thing on the emblem.

—Jonathan Knight

I was working at Sun Gear in the West End, and it was a slow day, hardly anyone in the mall. It was around three o'clock Tuesday afternoon. He came in, and I thought to myself, "Oh, he looks so familiar." He was wearing faded denim jeans with a pastel yellow polo T-shirt, and his hair was slicked back, giving it a kind of wet look. He was with a young girl, probably under twenty. She was kind of cute, with blond hair and the same kind of faded jeans and a white shirt. I kept thinking to myself, "He looks so familiar." I knew something was up when he started saying, "I'll take that one and that one and that one." I was like, "Wow, are you sure you want all of these sunglasses?" And he said, "Yes, I'll take them."

And he started looking at other sunglasses and these two teenagers came up to me and said, "Did he touch these sunglasses?" And I said, "Yeah, why?" And they said, "He's Kevin Costner!" And I went, "Oh my God, really?"

From then on I was so nervous, but he was real mannerly until all these people started coming into our store asking for autographs. Then he started telling me to kind of hurry it up. And he charged $450 of merchandise on his gold American Express card. And I was like, "Oh, I'm touching his card." He signed all the autographs, "Dances With Wolves, Dances With Wolves, Kevin." But mine he signed, "To Cindy, see you at the movies. Love, Kevin." Then he left.

—Cindy Sharez

I'm certain that yesterday, Thursday, I saw Kevin. I was in Sam's Wholesale, standing in line. He had a case of paper towels, two tires, and six large lasagnas. And there were about forty of us in line, so he had a lot of company. And I'm sure it was him. He had on jeans, and he badly needed a shave. So I'm pretty sure it was Kevin. I think he noticed me, but he may have been looking at my gallon-size picante sauce, so I'm not exactly sure. It was exciting to see him in town. I'm just sure it was him.

—Ann Drees

[Creed]

ALL THE KING'S MEN

From the official creed of the EP Impersonators International Association, based in Aurora, Illinois. The organization, which has 80 Elvis Presley impersonators among its 1,500 members, is committed to maintaining "standards for those who continue Elvis's creative and continuing art form."

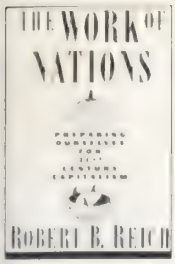
I have an obligation to all associations, groups, and businesses who purchase my entertainment services to provide those services in a professional and ethical manner.

I have an obligation as an Elvis performer, through all my personal, business, and social contacts, to be conscious of my image and what I represent and to conduct myself accordingly.

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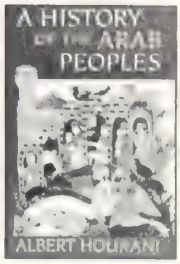
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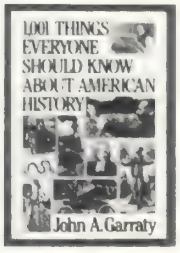
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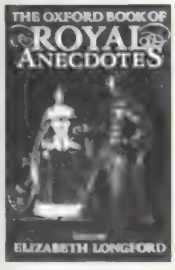
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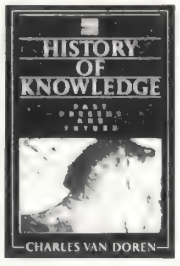
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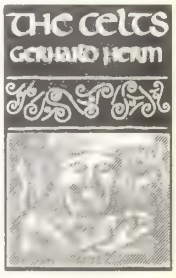
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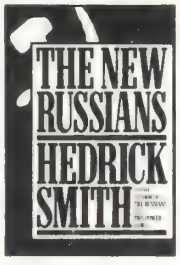
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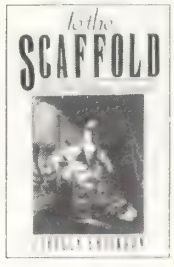
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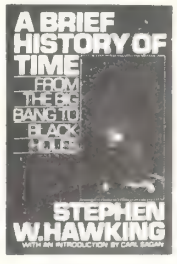
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[Statement]

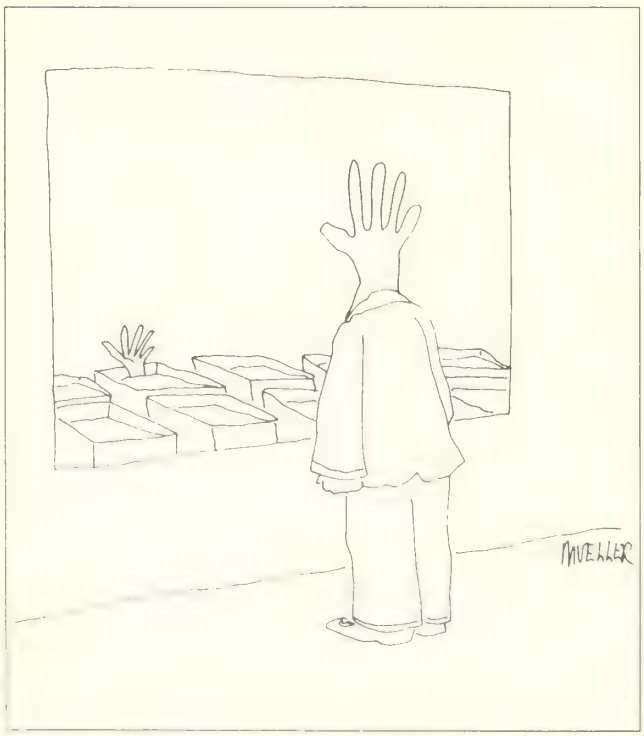
SAVE THE BALLOONS!

From a statement issued recently by the Willamette Balloon Company in Tigard, Oregon. This literature was developed by the National Association of Balloon Artists in Jacksonville, Florida. NABA distributes its literature to balloon retailers and to sponsors of balloon-release events who have come under pressure from anti-balloon activists.

Dear Environmentally Concerned,

Releasing helium-filled latex rubber balloons to celebrate events has come under attack from environmental organizations and individuals who want to ban balloon releases, claiming they litter the landscape, kill sea turtles who eat them, and injure or kill birds whose legs become tangled in the strings. A few communities have banned balloon releases on these grounds.

This is a case of people who mean well taking actions that have the opposite effect they desire. If latex balloons are not used, then thousands of rubber trees will be lost and the harm done to the environment will far exceed the good. In considering this issue, lawmakers should rely on the scientific literature instead of sensational newspaper accounts.



From Metro Times, *a weekly newspaper in Detroit.*

HERE ARE THE FACTS

Latex Balloons Help the Environment

With the exception of nuclear war, the greatest threat to the environment today is global warming due to the greenhouse effect. The burning of fossil fuels is the principal cause of global warming, but deforestation in the Third World also plays a significant part. When forests are cleared to make way for agriculture, vast quantities of carbon dioxide are released into the air—and the trees that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere are eliminated. In order to stop deforestation we must find ways for native people to make a living from the resources contained in tropical trees, including food, medicine, natural rubber, etc. Hundreds of thousands of rubber trees are now cultivated in these regions for the sole purpose of supplying rubber latex for balloons. One of the best ways to stop deforestation is to use the natural products that come from these trees—to use more latex balloons!

Balloons Provide Jobs and Pay Taxes

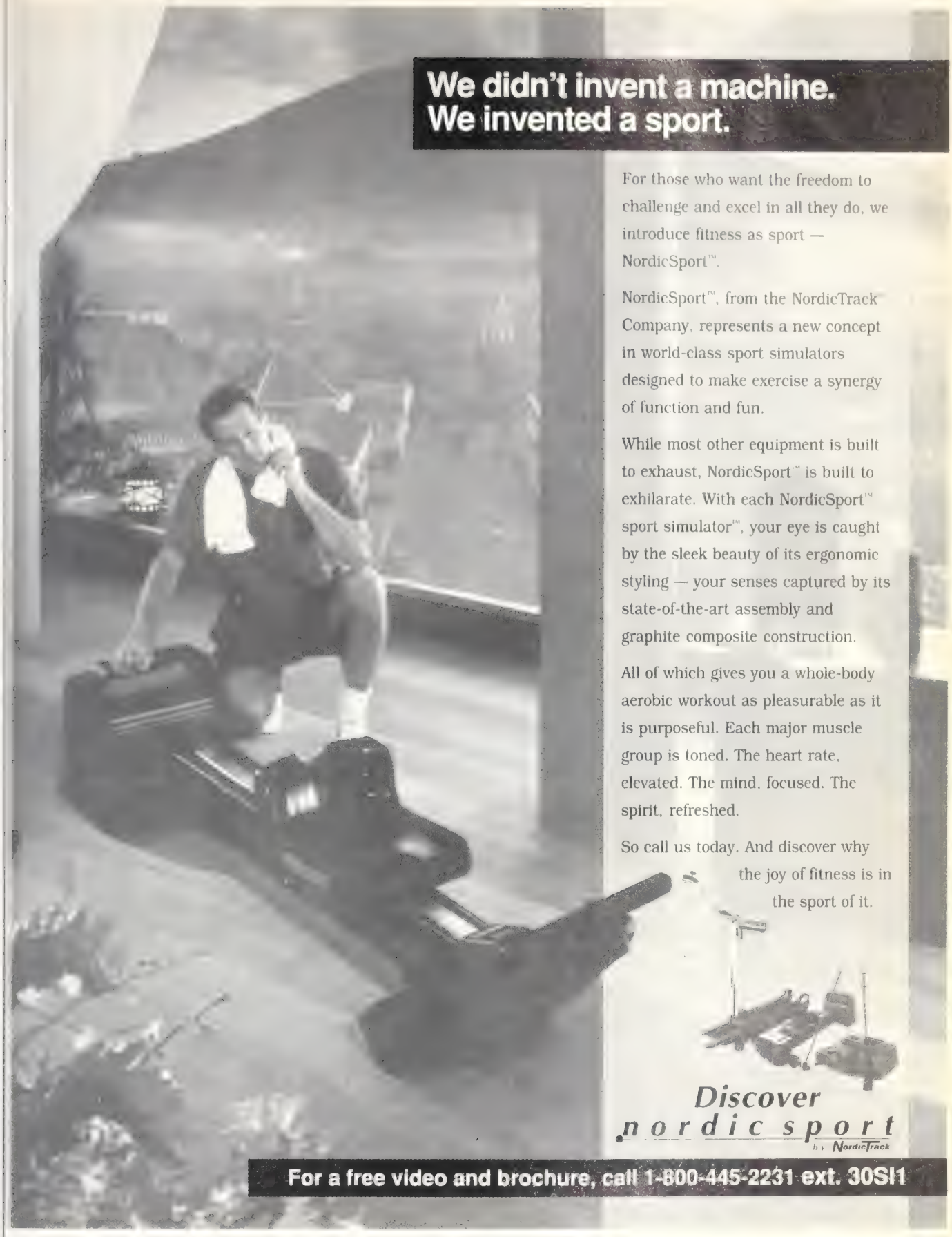
In the United States, about 60,000 people earn a significant part of their income through retail balloon sales. Most of these are small, family operations that employ young and unskilled workers. Without these jobs, many of these people would have difficulty finding other employment and would become a burden to society rather than taxpaying citizens. In addition, thousands are employed in desirable jobs manufacturing balloons; thousands more have jobs in the balloon wholesaling and distribution systems; thousands more are employed in plants where helium is refined, loaded into gas cylinders, and distributed. This is a billion-dollar industry. It is not right to take away even one of these jobs for the sake of a gesture that is merely symbolic.

Balloons Do Not Harm Turtles

A thorough review of all the scientific literature on turtles and balloons has shown that there is not a single documented case of a turtle death attributed to a balloon. In a recent scientific study at the University of Miami, pieces of latex balloon were fed to sea turtles, who passed them without harm (see "Pilot Experiments Concerning Balloon Ingestion by Sea Turtles"; University of Miami).

Balloons Are Not a Litter Problem

In a typical balloon release, most of the balloons will rise to a height of about five miles, where they rupture into tiny pieces that float harmlessly back to Earth and degrade as fast as leaves. Balloons that do not burst at high alti-



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tudes come down at a rate of about one balloon every fifteen miles (see "A Study of the [illegible] of Balloon Releases on the Environment" by D. K. Burchette, Technical Advisor, NABA, Jacksonville, Florida).

Strings Not Attached

Out of concern for the environment, strings are no longer used on balloons that will be launched. The balloons are released from a large net or a plastic bag that is saved and reused. Organized educational releases by schoolchildren use crepe paper to tie paper tags to the balloons.

Balloon Releases Help Good Causes

Balloon releases are used to teach schoolchildren about science and technology. Releases help raise funds for hundreds of worthwhile charities, including the United Way, the American Cancer Society, and the Boy Scouts of America. Colorful balloon releases are like art; they are not absolutely necessary, but they add to the quality of life!

[Essay]

TEACH BY THE VALUES YOU PREACH

From "Pedagogy of the Distressed," by Jane Tompkins, in College English, *Volume 52, No. 6, a journal published in Urbana, Illinois. Tompkins, who has been teaching for twenty-five years, is a professor at Duke University. Her essay "Fighting Words" appeared in the March 1989 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

As professors of English we are always, in one way or another, talking about what we think is wrong with the world and, to a lesser extent, about what we'd like to see changed. Whether we seek gender equality, or economic justice, or simply believe in the power and beauty of great literature, we preach some gospel or other. We do this indirectly, but we always do it. Yet our practice in the classroom doesn't often come close to embodying the values we preach.

I first became aware of this some four or five years ago when I was teaching at Columbia University. I remember walking to class down an empty hall and thinking to myself, "I should find out what my students want, what they need, and not worry about whether what I've prepared is good enough or ever gets said at all." Up until that day I had always thought that what I was doing was helping my students to understand the material we were studying—Melville or deconstruction or whatever—but at that moment I realized that there were actually three things I was more focused on: a) showing the students how smart I was; b) showing them how knowledgeable I was; and c) showing them how well prepared I was for class. I had been putting on a performance whose true goal was not to help the students learn but to act in such a way that they would have a good opinion of me. More than anything else, this is what we teach our students: how to perform within an institutional academic setting so that they will be thought of highly by their colleagues and instructors.

What is behind this model? How did it come to be that our main goal as academicians turned out to be performance? The answer to the question is fairly complicated, but let me offer one partial explanation. Each person comes into a professional situation dragging along with her a large bag full of desires, fears, expectations, needs, resentments—the list goes on. But the main component is fear. Fear is the driving force behind the performance model. Fear of being shown up for what you are: a fraud, stupid, ignorant, a clod, a dolt, a sap, a weakling, someone who can't cut the mustard. And I'm sure that my own fear of being shown up for what I really am was conveyed to my students, and insofar as I was afraid to be exposed, they too would be afraid.

Such fear is no doubt fostered by the way our institutions are organized, but it is rooted in childhood. Many, perhaps most, academics are people who as children were good performers at home and in school. That meant that as children we became such expert practitioners at imitating whatever style, stance, or attitude seemed most likely to succeed in the adult world from which we so desperately sought approval that we came to be split into two parts: the real backstage self, who didn't know anything, and the performing self, who got others to believe in its expertise and accomplishments. This pattern of seeking approval has extended itself into our practice as teachers. Still seeking approval from our peers and from our students, we exemplify a model of performance that our students succeed in emulating, thus passing the model down to future generations.

One of the odd things about people who teach for a living is how seldom they speak of these matters. This lack of self-awareness may stem from the fact that elite graduate schools teach their students to ignore pedagogy simply by ignoring it themselves. I often wondered by



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mysterious process others managed their , since no one I knew had been trained it and no one ever talked, really talked, what they did. Oh, there were plenty of success stories and the predictable remarks about a discussion that had been like pulling teeth, but never anything about how it really felt to be up there day after day. In this respect teaching seemed a lot like sex—something you weren't supposed to talk about or focus on but that you nevertheless were supposed to be able to do properly when the time came. People rarely discuss what the experience of teaching—or sex—is really like for them, partly because, at least in whatever subculture it is I belong to, there's no vocabulary for articulating the experience and no institutionalized format for doing so.

But there is one thing people do sometimes talk about in relation to teaching, more so now than in the past. They talk about using teaching as a vehicle for social change—to help students detect the manipulations of advertising or to resist the stereotypes of gender, race, and class. But I have come to think that what really matters as far as our own beliefs and projects for change are concerned is not so much what we talk about in class but what we do there. The classroom is a microcosm of the world; it is the chance we have to practice whatever ideals we may cherish. The kind of classroom situation one creates is the acid test of what it is one really stands for. And I wonder if, in the case of college professors, simply performing our competence in front of other people is all that that amounts to in the end.

Recently I made an awkward lunge in the direction of creating a different world in the classes I teach. It wasn't virtue or principle that led me to this but brute necessity. A couple of years ago when I realized that I wouldn't have time to prepare my classes in the usual way, I discovered, almost by accident, a way to make teaching more enjoyable and less anxiety-producing.

More enjoyment and less anxiety do not sound like very selfless or high-minded goals. But I had discovered that under the guise of serving students, I was being self-centered anyway, always worrying about what people thought of me. So I tried something else for a change.

What the method boils down to is this: The students are responsible for presenting the material to the class for most of the semester. I make up the syllabus in advance, explain it in detail at the beginning of the course, and try to give most of my major ideas away. (This is hard; holding on to one's ideas in case one should need them to fill some gap later on is bred in the bone after twenty-five years in the classroom.) The students sign up for two topics that interest them, and they work with whoever else has signed up for their topic. On the first round of reports the groups meet with me outside of class to discuss their ideas and

[Course Materials]

FORBIDDEN NEON

From material distributed to students by Joe Augusta, an instructor in the Department of Visual Arts at UCLA, during the first class of "The Glowing Art of Neon," a course Augusta teaches to graduate and undergraduate students. An excerpt from the handout appeared in the Summer 1990 issue of The Neon News, *a quarterly published in Volcano, Hawaii.*

What's difficult in neon is to liberate it from its association with advertising, and more recently from its bondage to a few trite graphic clichés. You must be honest, and let the medium speak to you as you hear it. But there are traps that can lead to a terminal case of banality and that will stop you from discovering *your own voice*. Therefore, the following subjects are to be avoided at all costs and will be prohibited from this class:

Palm trees, rainbows, lips, coat hangers, flowers, cacti, bikes, shoes, hats, shirts, pipes and cigars, cigarettes, paintbrushes, palettes, brushstrokes, graffiti, cameras.

Parrots, flamingos, geckos, cows, horses, unicorns, rabbits, dragons, camels, mice, cats, dogs, whales, sea lions, sharks, crabs, lobsters, clams, starfish, and all fish with scales.

Coffee cups, cocktail glasses, eyeglasses, teeth, hearts, eyes, feet, women of the night.

Stars, shooting stars, moons, planets, clouds, suns, waves, lightning.

Guitars, electric basses, acoustic basses, trumpets, saxophones, any type of piano.

Chairs, tables, desks, beds, light bulbs.

Barns, skyscrapers, cityscapes, landscapes, seascapes, flags, Greek columns, all houses.

Pizza, spaghetti, bread, hot dogs, Mexican food, hamburgers, steaming chicken.

Circles, triangles, squares, any geometric shape, complete or incomplete, and neon that goes through something and comes out the other side, or even looks like it does.

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Lutte Contre les Moustiques (The Battle Against the Mosquitoes), *a painting by Chéri Samba, a Zairian artist. Samba's paintings aim at increasing public awareness of issues such as racism, education, and disease; they include texts in French and Samba's native Lingala. The text reads, in part, "The mosquito which carries the malaria virus kills more people in Africa than AIDS" and "Killing mosquitoes is not the job of one person alone." Samba's work was exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago last winter.*

strategies of presentation. I give plenty of feedback in written form but no grades.

I find that my classes are better. The students have more to say in every class, more students take part in the discussions, students talk more to one another and less to me, and the intensity and quality of their engagement with the course materials is deeper than usual. Because I don't have the burden of responsibility for how things are going to go every time, I contribute only when I feel I really have something to say. I concentrate better on what is being said, on who is talking, and on how the class is going—how things *feel* in class.

The upshot is I do less work and enjoy class more. But I feel guilty about this, partly because somewhere along the way I got the idea that only backbreaking work should produce results. I struggle not to feel guilty about teaching in a way that is pleasurable and free from fear because part of what I now try to do as a teacher is convey a sense of the way I think life ought to be. This means, among other things, offering a course that is not a rat race, either for me or for the students. I no longer believe that piling on the work is a good in itself or that it proves seriousness and dedication.

Still, there is the question of whether, in shifting the burden of performance onto the students, I'm making them do work I'm too lazy to do myself, sending them off on a journey with inadequate supplies. It's true that in some cases the students don't deal with the material as well as I could, but that is exactly why they need to do it. It's not important for me to polish my skills, but they do need to develop theirs and to find a voice.

Teaching is a service occupation, but it can only work if you discover, at a certain point, how to make teaching serve you. Staying alive in the classroom and avoiding burnout means finding out what you need from teaching at any particular time. I've gone from teaching as performance to teaching as a maternal or coaching activity because I wanted to remove myself from center stage and get out of the students' way, to pay more attention to them and less to myself. Ideologically speaking, you might say I made the move in order to democratize the classroom, but in practice I did it because I was tired.

I'm not suggesting that other teachers should adopt this particular method. There are a million ways to teach. But what I am saying is that what we do in the classroom *is* our poli-

ties. No matter what we may say about Third World-this or feminist-that, our interactions with our students week in and week out demonstrate what we are for and what we are against in the long run. The politics of the classroom begins with the teacher's treatment of and regard for his or her self. A kinder, more sensitive attitude toward one's own needs as a human being, in place of a desperate striving to meet professional and institutional standards of arguable merit, can bring greater sensitivity to the needs of students and a more sympathetic understanding of their situations, both as workers in the academy and as people in the wider world.

[Memoir]

HUSBANDS

By Andre Dubus. From Broken Vessels, *a collection of essays published by David Godine in Boston. Dubus, who is the author of eight books of short fiction, was hit by a car in 1986 and lost part of one leg and the use of the other. He lives in Haverhill, Massachusetts. "Husbands" first appeared in* Epoch, *Vol. 40, No. 1.*

On a sunlit December afternoon, a UPS man carrying a long, wide package came up the steep hill of my driveway. The width of the package was from his armpit to his hand. I saw him through the glass door in front of my desk, and wheeled to the kitchen door and opened it, and waited for him to come up the series of six connected ramps, four of them long and parallel to each other. A single ramp would be too steep; you need one inch of grade for every twelve inches you climb or descend. Turning onto the last ramp, he saw me and smiled and asked how I was doing. I see a lot of UPS men. It is a simple way to shop.

"That's an exercise machine," I said. "How do you feel about putting it in the bedroom?"

Whenever I ask someone to do something for me, I am saying aloud that I cannot do it well, or simply, or easily. So I very often ask with odd sentences. In the first year after my injury, with one leg gone above the knee and the other in a cast and usually hurting, I said things like "I wonder if there's any cheese" or "Does anyone want hot chocolate?" I still do.

"Sure," the UPS man said. "Where is it?"

"Down at the end of the hall."

I wheeled backward out of the kitchen to let him by, then followed him down the hall and said, "All this time you've been waiting for a young wife to ask you to put it in the bedroom

[Course Description]

LEARNING TO EMBRACE MOSQUITO

From the course offering "Song of the Mosquito," in the January 1991 newsletter of the Teaching Drum Outdoor School in Three Lakes, Wisconsin. The course, taught by an instructor named Tamarack, began at dawn on June 18 and ended at dusk on June 19.

The closest to a conservist complaint in the Northcountry is the one levied against the Mosquito. But to some, this maligned sister is an honored Teacher and respected Guardian of wild places. Tamarack was inspired by She Who Talks With Loons to seek Mosquito's wisdom. During Tamarack's quest, Mosquito has shown him how to live in balance with her clan. In honor of this gift, he'd like to guide others on the path to knowing and embracing Mosquito. In fact, he *must* share this gift; otherwise, like all that is given, it will fade.

We'll discover how to walk in peace without the aid of protective clothing or chemicals. We'll learn how to move in the rhythm of the Forest, so we don't stand out as aliens ripe for bloodletting.

We are asked to give in order to receive; for this particular gift, pain is the offering. After ritual preparation, we will strive to walk beyond ourselves into the realm where we are one with the Life-Spirit. There, we will bare ourselves to Mosquito, in order that we might hear her voice. She will likely speak a different verse of her lifesong to each of us, which we will share with each other in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the circle in which she dwells.

Certain herbs call Mosquito to us; certain herbs send her elsewhere. The same is true of certain clothing colors and patterns, certain food and smoke smells, certain ways and times of moving. (We fast from regular food during the course, and from meat, spices, and stimulants for four days prior, so that their effects and odors will not interfere with our experimentation.)

This course is scheduled for the height of Mosquito season. It will likely be one of the most personally challenging—and rewarding—times of our lives.

America needs a n
fast and effective clea

An alarming lack of progress in cleanup.

When Congress enacted the Federal Superfund program in 1980, the goal was to quickly clean up America's most dangerous hazardous waste sites. Congress and many others assumed there would be only a relatively few such sites and that cleanup costs would be limited.

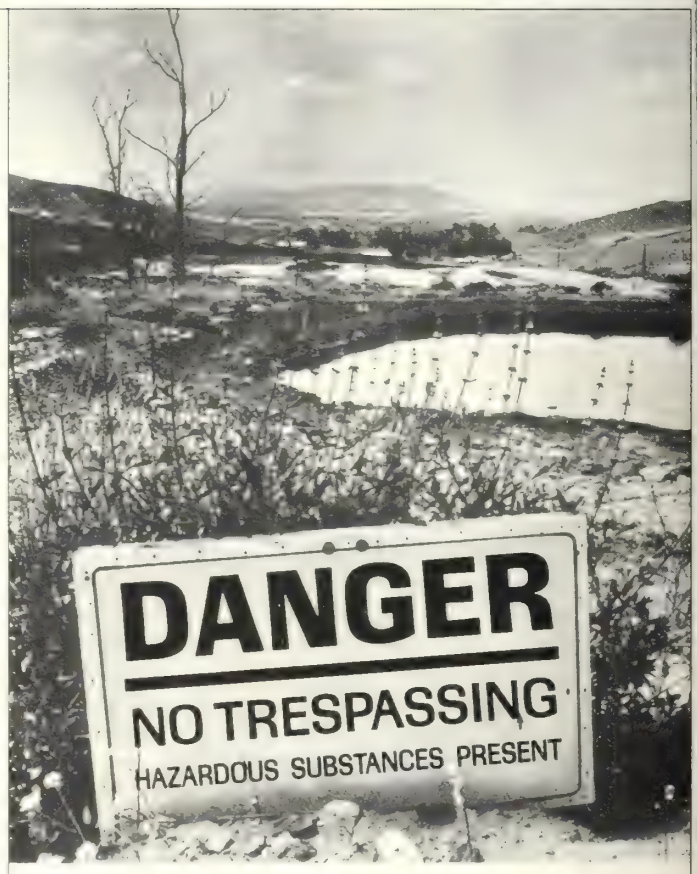
Now, after a decade of trying to make Superfund work, it's clear these assumptions were wrong and that a quick fix was never possible. What's wrong with Superfund and why has so little been accomplished?

The problem is twofold. First, the real scope of our nation's hazardous waste situation is far greater than Congress anticipated. With 1,200 priority sites already identified, growing numbers of sites are being found in every state. The Environmental Protection Agency expects that by the year 2000, there may be as many as 2,000 priority sites.

With rapidly rising cleanup costs, which now average about $25 million per site, the eventual price tag is staggering. According to a top government agency, cleaning up all of America's hazardous waste sites could take from 30 to 60 years and cost up to $500 billion!

A second problem is Superfund's alarming lack of progress in cleanup. A decade and billions of dollars later, fewer than 60 out of the 1,200 sites have actually been cleaned up.

Why? One major reason is Superfund's liability system. It requires that cleanup be paid for by establishing liability–who sent what waste, how much and where–and then negotiating or litigating with those believed to be responsible. While this sounds good in theory, it hasn't worked in practice. Instead, the result has been



delayed cleanup and enormous legal, consulting and other costs unrelated to cleanup.

Compounding the problems instead of solving them.

This is because working out who pays and how much for cleanup is very difficult. Under Superfund, anyone who simply used or owned the site at any time could be liable for the entire cleanup bill. Users can include major corporations, small businesses, local governments, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, even individuals. And it does not matter who caused the harm or whether they did anything wrong. Superfund's retroactive

w system to achieve
p of our environment.

liability provision makes parties pay for past actions based on today's standards.

For example, at 422 sites almost 14,000 parties have been notified that they could be liable. In turn, many of them are identifying still others who contributed in some way to the presence of waste at each site. And since Superfund liability deals with past waste disposal, the record of users can go back 25, 30 or even 40 years and can number in the hundreds.

The result? The focus on cleanup has been lost as private and public parties spend years in difficult but unavoidable negotiations and litigation, trying to work out agreements that would provide funds for cleanup. At some sites, more money has been spent resolving complex factual issues than on cleanup itself. This does a lot for lawyers and consultants, but very little for the environment. And of course, these costs are eventually passed on to all of us as consumers in higher prices for goods and services. Isn't it time to stop this wasteful process and get on with cleaning up our environment?

At AIG, we think so. There is little to be gained by arguing over waste disposal that happened long ago. America needs a system that will promote fast and effective cleanup, reduce unnecessary legal fees, spread the cost of cleanup broadly, and encourage responsible waste management practices today.

A PROPOSED SOLUTION: THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST FUND.

To accomplish this, we have proposed creating a National Environmental Trust Fund, similar to the National Highway Trust Fund. Its resources would be used exclusively for cleaning up old hazardous waste sites. Superfund's tough liability provisions would still apply for future pollution, as would all other state and federal environmental laws designed to promote responsible waste management.

One way this fund could be financed would be by adding a separate fee to commercial and industrial insurance premiums in the United States. Even a modest assessment, say 2% of premiums and an equivalent amount for self-insureds, would provide about $40 billion over the next decade - more than enough to clean up the 1,200 highest-priority sites. Without endless time and money spent on legal debates about liability.

A national advisory board consisting of private individuals, industry and public officials could be charged with overseeing the program. We also suggest giving consideration to establishing local technical monitoring committees in each community. These groups of local citizens, representatives of industry and others would work with the Environmental Protection Agency and their own state on the particular cleanup site - from the very beginning of the cleanup effort.

YOU CAN HELP.

We've waited long enough and spent enough money in the courtrooms. Now it's time for action. A cleaner America should be all Americans' shared goal and shared responsibility.

To express your views, or if you would like further information about AIG's proposed National Environmental Trust Fund, write to Mr. M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, American International Group, Inc., 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

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ADVANTAGE, MEN

From a list of phrases describing weakness in women tennis players, used by television sportscasters covering mixed doubles matches at the U.S. Open in September 1989. The list is included in "Gender Stereotyping in Televised Sports," a new study by the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles, which found that when describing men's play sportscasters were almost four times as likely to use phrases denoting strength as ones denoting weakness; when describing women's play, they used just as many phrases denoting weakness as ones denoting strength.

Nervous
Nearly lost it all
Less aggressive
Shaky
Lost control
Not a very intelligent attempt
Running out of gas
After she lost, she wanted to go home
Tired and wounded
Starting to come unglued
Leg-weary
Mind is willing but the body isn't
Running on fumes
Dejected
Suffering
Confused
Lack of confidence
A little ticked off that she missed that one
In a quandary
Not real centered right now
Needs to put some more hard work in on the tennis court
A little flat
Doesn't have that spring in her step
Snoozing at the net
Feeling a little pressure
On emotional overflow
A little perturbed
Really hard on herself
Still upset from yesterday
A little lack of enthusiasm on that play
Flat-footed all day
Seems mystified (by her own shot)
Getting a little desperate
Distraught
Choking on her serve

and you get an old buck in a wheelchair."

Still in the hall, he said over his shoulder, "I wish my wife would do that."

"Do what?"

He was in the bedroom, and I was rolling through the door.

"Tell me to put it in the bedroom," he said.

The summer before that December, I had a lap pool built in my front yard so that I could experience motion outside of my chair. A lap pool is three feet deep. Beside mine is a concrete slab that is level with my chair; from the slab, steps with aluminum railings go to the pool, and by lifting myself on the railings, I can go down and up on my butt. Most of all, the pool is to replace the beach. I love the beach and probably will always miss it, but I cannot go there anymore without someone to pull my chair backward and tilted so that the small front wheels are above the sand. They are the ones that sink.

On a beautiful early summer afternoon, my son Jeb, my two friends Bill and Jack, and I were sitting near the pool, our shirts off, when the man who delivers for the pharmacy drove up the driveway. He is a short, pleasant man, retired from the gas company. He wears thick glasses, always a visored cap, and has gray hair. Reading gas meters taught him to carry dog biscuits; he says they worked better than the spray designed to fend off dogs. Always he brought biscuits for my dog, Luke, a golden retriever. Luke was lying in the shade that day, and went to the man, and sat at his feet to be fed. I see this delivery man at least every other week, yet I had forgotten his wedding anniversary. But Bill remembered, and said: "How was the fiftieth wedding anniversary?"

"Oh, it was something. They picked us up at the house in a limousine, took us to the function room. There was a hundred people there. We had cocktails, prime rib, cake, champagne, the works. I says to the wife, When you've had a car this long, it's time to trade in on a new model. She says, I was thinking the same thing. I says, I was thinking of trading in for two twenty-five-year-olds. She says, They'd kill you."

"Fifty years," Jack said. "That's something to celebrate. Any marriage is hard."

"Oh, sure, it was hard. That first year, back in 1939, I couldn't get regular work at the shoe factory. For about six months, I couldn't get a forty-hour week. But after that it was all right."

Jeb and Jack and Bill and I looked at each other; only Bill had a girlfriend, his fiancée. We looked back at the delivery man, reaching in his pocket for a dog biscuit.



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…ter the dinner and the toasts and every-
… they put us in the limousine and took us
… We go upstairs and get into the bed,
… says to the wife, You think we ought to
try what we tried fifty years ago? She says, It'll cost you money just to touch it. So next morning I go downstairs and I put a dollar bill under her orange juice glass, and I put another one under her cereal bowl, and one under her coffee cup. I put one under the sugar bowl and the salt shaker and the pepper shaker. Then I put one under my glass and bowl and cup, and one under her napkin so she'd get the message. Then I sat down and waited for her."

He stood facing us, smiling, petting Luke, putting another bone-shaped biscuit in Luke's mouth. I said, "Aren't you going to tell us the end of that story?"

"That is the end," he said, smiling, and lifted his hand in a wave and walked away from us to his car.

On a warm blue September afternoon, I went to see my paraplegic friend. I will call him Joe. A few years ago he fell off a ladder. He works with disabled people, out of an office in a nearby town on the Merrimack River. He taught me to drive with hand controls, but that is not part of his job. He did it one Sunday afternoon, at my house, saving me eight hours of lessons at ten dollars an hour.

In the parking lot outside his office, Joe was waiting in his chair. He wanted to see my new $2,000 rig: a steel box on the roof of my car that, with two chains like a bicycle's and an elongated hook, can fold and lift my chair into it, and lower it to the ground beside my door. A button inside the car controls it. I parked beside him and opened my door and watched his face as I lowered the chair. He is a lean man with a drooping but trimmed black mustache. As the chair descended, he smiled and shook his head.

"It's too easy, Andre. It's too easy."

I had learned to drive in his Cadillac. To remove the wheels from the chair and then place them and the seat cushion and the folded chair behind the driver's seat, you must sit sideways in the car, with your legs outside, so that you can pull the car seat as far as possible toward the steering wheel. My right knee does not bend enough for me to swing my leg in and out of a car, but in Joe's Cadillac I could slide backward to the passenger seat and get my leg inside. In my Toyota Celica the console and hand brake are in my way, and that movement is difficult. I said, "Nothing is too easy."

But he liked the machine. People who like machines admire its simple efficiency. People in parking lots stop to watch it work. We went inside and met the people working there. All but one was disabled. There was a blind man, and Joe grinned and asked him if he had read my books. The blind man laughed.

[Agenda]

A CHANGE OF LIFE

From "A Fish out of Water," by Mario Vargas Llosa, in Granta, *No. 36, a quarterly published in London. The list below was written in 1986, the year before Vargas Llosa became involved in Peruvian politics. In 1990 he ran for president and was defeated by Alberto Fujimori. Vargas Llosa's most recent novel is* In Praise of the Stepmother.

I had turned fifty-one in March 1987. All signs were that my life, unsettled from the day I was born, would become calm: a life spent between Lima and London, devoted exclusively to writing, with an occasional university stint in the United States. The previous year I had dreamed up a "five year plan" of what I wanted to accomplish before my fifty-fifth birthday and had scribbled it in my memo book.

1. A work for the theater about a little, old, Quixote-like man who, in the Lima of the Fifties, embarks on a crusade to save the city's colonial-era balconies that are threatened with demolition.

2. A novel, something between a detective story and a fictional fantasy, about human sacrifices and political crimes in a village in the Andes.

3. An essay on the gestation of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

4. A play about an entrepreneur who, in a suite in the Savoy Hotel in London, meets his best friend from school, someone he thought had died but who has, thanks to hormones and surgery, turned into an attractive woman.

5. A historical novel inspired by Flora Tristan, the Franco-Peruvian revolutionary, ideologist, and feminist, who lived at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In the same memo book I had also jotted down less urgent projects: to learn that devilishly difficult language German; to live for a time in Berlin; to try, again, to get through books that had defeated me—*Finnegans Wake* and *The Death of Virgil;* to go down the Amazon from Pucallpa to Belém do Pará in Brazil; to bring out a revised edition of all my novels.



From Overlooked in America: The Success and Failure of Federal Land Management, *a collection of photographs by Robert Glenn Ketchum, published this month by Aperture. The beaver pond pictured here is located in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area in Ohio. Ketchum is the author of* The Tongass: Alaska's Vanishing Rainforest.

On our way out Joe introduced me to a quadriplegic, perhaps in his early forties. With him was a pretty blond woman. Then Joe and I went through wide doors that open and close by buttons on the wall beside them, so that if you are in a chair you do not have to pull the door toward you or hold it open while you wheel across its threshold.

I said, "Did you see *Coming Home*?"

"That's a good movie."

"He couldn't feel her, right?"

"No."

"But you get erections."

"Voluntary and involuntary."

"Then what?"

"It's better. Look, before you get hurt, what do you do? You get on the wife and pump away; then it's over. Now I take my time. That's why it's better. It's in the brain, Andre. Why do you want to get laid? For your brain, right?"

"I guess so. Can you have an orgasm?"

"No. It takes muscles. So what?"

"I had a problem, my first year. Making love made me think about my legs, and I couldn't come. Sometimes, but not all the time."

"So?"

"I know. But it got to me. Then in the third year, that lady you met at my house—remember her?"

"She was nice."

"She surely was. She made me feel whole again."

Behind us the door opened and the quadriplegic came out in his mechanical chair, the blond woman behind him. They told me, Nice to meet you, we all said good-bye, and Joe and I watched them go down the ramp and across the lot to his van, watched him go up a lift behind the passenger's seat, then move his chair to the steering wheel. He is able to drive with his hands. She climbed in beside him.

"Look at him," Joe said. "A quad. She's been with him for seven years, *after* he got fucked up. What do you think he's got, a seven-inch tongue?"

They drove out to the street and she waved at us. We waved and I watched her smile and hair. Then I looked at Joe.

"What?" he said.

"You're telling me that you go to bed with your wife, you take your time, you get hard, your wife gets on top and does what she wants to do till she's finished, and you don't feel anything."

"That's right. And, let me tell you, there's a lot more to our marriage than sex." ■

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1 1991 GM Customer Satisfaction Survey
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PUTTING QUALITY ON THE ROAD

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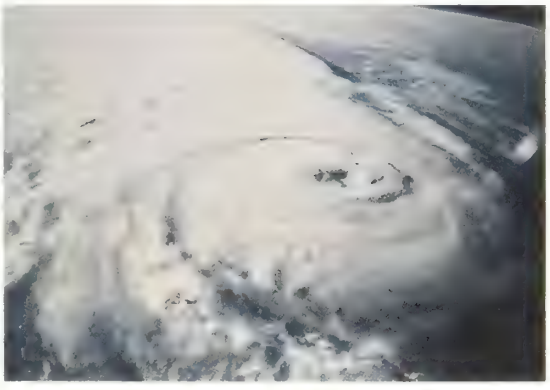
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WRITTEN IN THE BIG WIND

Hurricanes spell doom for coastal development

By Bob Shacochis



Atop the IRE Financial Building on Dixie Highway in Coral Gables, Florida, Max Mayfield and I sat one midsummer afternoon before a bank of computer terminals, watching information gush cybernetically into the National Hurricane Center. The data flowed in from land stations, ships, aircraft, radar, buoys at sea; it sprinkled down from helium balloons and geostationary satellites into the Cadillac of supercomputer animation systems, McIDAS (for Man-computer Interactive Data Access System). On the screen we were looking at, the North Atlantic was expressing itself in a language of heat, pressure, and motion, and McIDAS was translating this biospheric oratory into data-generated pictures, images we could enhance to our heart's content. Were we watching a hurricane form? We didn't know yet. What was certain was that the season of volatility had begun, an anxious time meteorologically and also psychically—a time when people along the Gulf of Mexico, the Eastern seaboard, and, to the south, on the islands of the Caribbean live in real fear of being visited by sudden, violent catastrophe.

A hurricane is the Atlantic (and northeast Pacific) version of a tropical cyclone. Because warm water is the essential ingredient of hurricanes, these storms tend to originate in relatively quiet, equatorial waters. For the most part, they are a major factor only in the western Pacific, where they are called typhoons; in the Indian Ocean, where they are simply called cyclones; and in the warmer waters of the North Atlantic, where they derive their name from the Carib Indian word *huracan*, "big wind." Although it is not known precisely why hurricanes form, forecasters such as Mayfield do know that these whirlwind fevers that cool our overheated planet develop from smaller tropical storms that whip up in the doldrums west of the Cape Verde Islands.

On the computer's large screen, a sequence of schematic riffs—elongated inverted Vs, representations of low-pressure zones—staggered out across the doldrums, where, from late June through mid-November each year, the north-inclined sun brews the indigo surface waters beyond 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Above the water, trade winds that have whipped off the coast of northwest Africa tangle with those blowing up from the southern hemisphere. These convulsing and contradictory winds agitate the heat-sponsored Atlantic anger, urging

Bob Shacochis, a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine, *is the author of two collections of short stories,* Easy in the Islands *and* The Next New World. *He lives in Tallahassee, Florida, where he is at work on a novel.*

Photograph courtesy of the National Hurricane Center



it toward the surface and into a vaporous rage.

Mayfield, pointing to the screen, called my attention to how, within one of the low-pressure troughs, the July sun had simmered the surface waters enough for moisture-laden air to quicken its rise; it was being sucked up into clouds. He switched McIDAS to its time-lapse satellite picture loop and highlighted the thermal properties of the increasingly unstable storm: warm cores of luminous reds, oranges, yellows; mantles of refreshing greens and blues where rain was falling. New data threaded into the machine. The moisture-rich trough we were observing bloomed splatters of aspiration, graphic popcorn—thunderstorms. What was previously a tropical disturbance, with lazy 8- to 18-mile-an-hour winds, had intensified. Vertical columns of scattered cumulus—puffs of steam updrafted off the ocean, cooling into rain as they expanded—had coalesced, swollen together, to create a tropical depression, their combined winds (up to 38 mph) declaring a fragile confederation.

While the prevailing winds carried the storm from east to west/northwest, the west-to-east rotation of the earth rubbed against the storm with a soft friction, like a flywheel or a gear set perpendicular to the heaped plate of the weather system, causing it to slowly spin counterclockwise in a spiral twist. This was one of the signs that a sizable tropical storm might be stewing. Known as Coriolis, or deflecting, force, the earth's rotation also inspires the ocean currents to circulate, redistributing the heat accumulated in warm tropical waters. In the weather system we'd been monitoring on McIDAS, the clouds had assembled into an inward-turning pattern, a merry-go-round of brisk winds and rainsqualls, and the system's isobars—lines of equal pressure—formed awkward concentric rings, like an asymmetrical onion. (The closer the isobars are packed together, the fiercer the speed of the winds.) Now, if a vortex deepened at the center of the storm and if the clouds walled up into an eye, forming a chimney for evaporating water to be sucked heavenward off the ocean—if these things happened, we'd have a hurricane: a massive, self-sustaining heat engine, siphoning excess warmth out of the ocean and taking it on a parabolic ride west and north, its intention to balance the earth's heat budget, spreading around the surplus at cooler latitudes. A well-developed hurricane is able to maintain its whirling, feverish tantrum because warm, moist air, as it condenses,

Photograph by Herman Kokojan / Black Star

releases latent heat—an explosive fuel.

Hurricanes, tropical cyclones everywhere in the world, are by far the worst storms in nature's portfolio. Full-blown hurricanes are typically one hundred times larger than a thunderstorm; every minute they release energy equivalent to a hydrogen bomb. A hurricane's nearly inconceivable force is perhaps easier to grasp if converted to a measurement of electrical power: An estimated 16 trillion kilowatts are produced by a hurricane in a single day. At such a rate, about an hour of hurricane energy would be sufficient to supply all the electric power generated in the United States during the course of a year.

About 90 percent of a hurricane's energy is continuously converted as the water vapor vacuumed up through the hurricane's eye expands at higher altitudes, chills, and then condenses into rain, which falls in buckets, barrels, tanker-loads: An average hurricane precipitates approximately 2 billion tons of water a day. Only in the matter of wind speed is a hurricane outdone by other weather systems. Hurricane winds begin, on the Beaufort scale, at a feeble 74 miles an hour and rarely exceed 150. Very weak tornadoes clock at 40 mph; more likely, they twist at between 200 and 300 mph, with maximum wind speeds said to approach the speed of sound (761.6 mph).

Nevertheless, the Labor Day hurricane that struck the Florida Keys in 1935, the most prodigious tropical cyclone on record in the United States, manufactured winds in excess of 200 mph, rendering the night air a blur of effervescent fire. The sandy topsoil of the Keys had been blasted airborne off its coral foundation; the quartz particles collided with each other, discharging electricity. Without shelter, anything alive in the middle of such a scourge didn't stay alive for long.

"Several people were sandblasted to death," Mayfield told me—well, not with relish, but clearly the details intrigued him. Mayfield's a former Oklahoma weather nut who, "being smart enough to learn calculus and dumb enough to work the midnight shift," fit right in as a hurricane specialist at the NHC. "They just found their shoes and belt buckles," he said, their existence nicked away, molecule by molecule, and zipped into the atmosphere.

Mayfield went to his files for a photograph, shot years ago in the aftermath of a Caribbean hurricane. A 1- by 3-inch pine board, maybe 20 feet long, had been speared dead center through the trunk of a palm tree—a trick customarily regarded as the signature of a tornado. Then again, tornadoes often run in savage packs on the fringe of hurricanes, taking advantage of the unstable conditions. Hurricane Beulah (1967) whisked up 115 of them. In 1969, more than one hundred tornadoes paved the route inland for Hurricane Camille. Her winds, estimated at 190 mph, brought ashore 8 inches of rain and tides more than 24 feet above normal, decimating towns; 256 people died.

Hurricane winds also bear responsibility for some of the tallest waves known on Earth, frequently lashing open-ocean swells to heights of 40 to 50 feet. "I am more afraid of West Indian hurricanes than I am of the entire Spanish Navy," confessed President William McKinley at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, acknowledging the truth that throughout history weather had sent more ships to the bottom than warfare. Thus, in 1898, a hurricane-warning network was established in the West Indies by a federal Weather Bureau itself only eight years old.

Even in the hurricane's eye—the beguilingly serene oculus of the storm, a core sample of a quiet sunny day—all is awry. As winds and enormous bands of rain clouds spiral inward and wall up into a monstrous chimney-like tower of weather, air pressure plummets to its nadir, shaving the full weight of gravity by 70 pounds per square foot for each inch subtracted from the barometer. During 1988's [illegible] which registered the [illegible] lowest sea-level barometric reading for this hemisphere, roughly 280 pounds of air pressure vanished up the eye. In this unbearable lightness, eardrums strain and pop; capillaries swell, bringing to the mouth, some victims say, a taste of blood. It is a vortex so ravenous the sea itself lifts upward, creating a blister on the surface some 5 to 15 feet above the already exaggerated tide—with Camille it was 25 feet!—and hauling the dome ashore in a storm surge so abrupt its victims are swallowed like a biblical army, trapped in the middle of joining seas. Beach houses are there and then gone. Buildings lose their structural integrity and collapse within minutes. People hunker down in emergency shelters, or drown.

BUILDINGS LOSE THEIR STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY AND COLLAPSE. BEACH HOUSES ARE THERE AND THEN GONE

Before leaving the center that afternoon, I asked Mayfield to put a price tag on the damage should a major Camille-like hurricane strike southern Florida today. He quoted the figure everybody's using to communicate the seriousness of such an event—$10 billion, *minimum*.

And the chances of such a strike? Mayfield

would rather not think about it. "There's been so much development on the United States coast," he said. "People are not going to believe the destruction."

During hurricane season, the promiscuous, overheated North Atlantic gives birth to a tropical disturbance every three to five days, from eighty to one hundred a season. Not a big deal. The one we had in sight thanks to McIDAS decayed within twenty-four hours, guillotined by the fair, dry weather kingdom known as the Bermuda high. But of every ten tropical disturbances, one exhibits the sporting desire for fame, puts its foot down on the accelerator, and matures into a tropical storm, its winds reaching 39 to 73 mph. It earns a chummy name, becomes an object of attention, a personality. On average, each year six of these rising stars become celebrities—become hurricanes—by virtue of their furious tenacity, in their spectacular lust (or hatred) for heat. In the secret lives of storms, heat is everything. In their public lives, all is cold, cruel destruction.

The western Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean basin—they have sculpted my private map of *place;* they have shaped an outline of happiness on both the outer world and inner self. These are my territories, where I live and have lived, where I prefer to be—the coastline from Delaware to Venezuela, and all the islands peppered in between. Regardless of their vital differences, they form an entity that constitutes my native range, a geographical house—a wondrous mansion, really, its thousand rooms tied one to another by broad corridors and sweeping stairways of wind and ocean current. On a perfect October day, the right breeze blowing from the south, I can stand on the shore at Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and smell breakfast cooking in the West Indies.

For the white man and the black man, this is the old part of the New World, its quincentennial anniversary just around the corner, a swath of the hemisphere colonized by the wind and endowed by history and nature with a singular personality found by many outsiders to be languidly perverse, even threatening, though not without its colorful, sun-dazed charms. It is, in fact, a personality defined by hurricanes. Earthquakes, by comparison, are sloppy accidents; tornadoes, nihilistic lone gunmen. But hurricanes are something else, visceral paradoxes echoing the symbiotic dynamics of the macrocosm, both good and bad, dry and wet, cold and hot—rapacious organisms but also law-abiding citizens of the universe. And, as such, the geographical house I call home is bound, in perpetuity, to a contract with disaster, payment due on a regular basis; its inhabitants both resigned to and fascinated by the brutality of their ever-continuing education in economics and love—catastrophe's two most illuminating lessons. These coastlines, these islands—it's as if each year they are entered into a ruthless lottery, and the losers—maybe one or two, maybe the entire bunch—get a divine thrashing.

I do not mean to imply, however, that hurricanes are a game of cosmic chance. Over the past century, from Maine to Texas, not a single mile of coastline has been spared a visit from these storms; nor will any stretch of the coast be spared in the century to come—100 percent guaranteed.

LIFE'S A BEACH, bumper stickers joke, but the pun belies the demographic fact that the shore has evolved beyond its mythological role in the national perception of the good life, one's just reward measured in two-week packets. It's not simply where America relaxes; it's where we live. As of 1990, one of every two Americans resides within 50 miles of a coastline—participating, then, in the delicate coastal ecosystem; enjoying, altering, polluting. About 70 million of us live in the 364 coastal counties along the Eastern seaboard and the Gulf of Mexico. It turns out that the Beach Boys, twenty-five years ago, were oracles of population distribution. "If everybody had a notion," they jubilated. As it happened, everybody *did.* The center peeled toward the edges, as if a centrifugal force and an amphibious yearning ruled our national disposition.

In August 1986, my wife and I moved to Hatteras, one of the long barrier islands of North Carolina's Outer Banks, the last great stretch of unspoiled sandy coastline left in the East. Crossing over the Currituck bridge from the mainland, we stopped north of Kitty Hawk to overnight with friends at their beach cottage in Southern Shores. We were fed homemade crab cakes with margaritas, wrapped in temperate sea breezes, and put to bed. In the morning I awoke to a hangover, which was anticipated, and a hurricane, which was not. When we had retired for the evening, Charley was only a rumor of a storm, a weather system with an identity crisis somewhere off the coast of South Carolina. But he'd moved north and grown, and now here he was, a flamboyant upstart bearing down on us.

We were grudgingly titillated; our lives were being complicated, but in a seductive way. The radio offered halfhearted advice to evacuate, not worth considering. We were moving *in,* not *out.* It was Sunday morning: The four of us wanted the newspaper, something to eat. We happily ventured outdoors, cocking our shoul-

lers against the rising wind. Charley's eye was till 90 miles or so to the south, below Ocra oke Island, entering Pamlico Sound, granting is a three- to five-hour grace period before the ipper banks—Nags Head, Kitty Hawk, Kill Devil Hills—would be aswirl in nastiness.

Pro-development county commissioners long the coast are habitually reluctant to call or evacuations. The average hurricane fore ast made twenty-four hours in advance has a nargin of error of more than a hundred miles; o implement a National Hurricane Center varning costs about $150,000 to $200,000 per oastal mile. County budget officers cringe, he Chamber of Commerce is vocal in its pposition, highway patrolmen are over- whelmed. Resort owners scream, exasperated acationers demand their money back; long- ime residents swear they won't budge—we tayed in '63, in '73, whenever, they grouse, nd it wasn't so bad.

As it was, ferry service from Ocracoke Island o the mainland had been suspended. Ferries hat had been evacuating people from the orth end of Ocracoke to Hatteras Island would discontinue service at 11:30 A.M. The National Park Service had ordered camp- rounds cleared on both islands, and the coun- y had recommended that anyone in an area rone to flooding—virtually the entire Outer anks—or living in a mobile home should nove to shelter. This was the peak of the ourist season, when the weekend population f the fragile ribbon of sand dunes, marsh, and naritime forests that form the Banks bloat up eyond 150,000 persons. (Hatteras Island's ermanent residents number around 4,800.) raffic from Ocracoke and Hatteras crawled owly north on Highway 12 toward South Nags Head, Highway 12 eventually leading to ne only way to drive off the Banks.

By 10 A.M., as we climbed into our host's ar, Charley's first rainband sliced by. At the orthern end of the 158 bypass, traffic bottle- ecked as thousands of vehicles jockeyed to scape the island over the Currituck bridge. The jam snaked bumper to bumper to the outhern terminus of the route, where it again ottlenecked at the Nags Head–Manteo cause- way. We detoured two blocks east to the ocean nd discovered that the café on the landward nd of the Avalon Fishing Pier was open for usiness. The rain blew in a car-wash effect round the entrance to the pier, falling up, own, and sideways as we dashed through it.

Inside, the pier house rolled like a ship at ea, pitching and shuddering; rain clattered gainst the windows like a spray of gravel. I elt too punk to eat and, during a lull, went utside to marvel at the waves thundering ashore, their crests scouring the floor of the pier. In the spindrift I found a golf tee, a tetra- cycline prescription bottle issued in El Paso, a high-heeled shoe, a welding mask, fluorescent light tubes inexplicably intact, dozens of pink tampon inserters, and everywhere limp flowers of garbage. Hurricanes are slobs: They not only make trash out of a coastline; they haul it in and dump it as well.

Charley had gathered forward speed and was trudging up the back-bay waters by the time we left the pier at noon. Gale-force winds demanded our driver's keen attention. The 158 bypass remained gridlocked, inching for- ward, the inbound lanes wide open across the bridges, reserved for emergency vehicles. And there the islands' weekend visitors would sit, storm-wracked, until midafternoon, by which time however much of Charley that was com- ing our way was full upon us. It wasn't much—as long as you were safely indoors. Not everyone was. Charley killed somebody. The Nags Head–Manteo causeway had flooded, and a local business- woman, trying to get off the island, had lost sight of the pavement and driven into a canal.

PRO-DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONERS ARE RELUCTANT TO CALL FOR EVACUATIONS. RESORT OWNERS SCREAM

Just eleven months before, in September 1985, Hurricane Gloria had charged toward the upper banks wielding 130-mph winds, prompting the Pentagon to assure North Car- olina governor James Martin that hundreds of "body bags and tags" were being readied to accommodate the expected casualties. As it happened, the storm lost intensity before reaching the island and had diminished to Category 1 (74–95 mph) by the time it briefly focused its Cyclops eye on Cape Hatteras. Still, the attending winds—gusting over 100 mph—were no one's idea of comfort. After Charley many local residents were shocked, fearful, ready to speak out.

"We can continue to allow the mass stack- ing of people on our narrow strip of sand and one day have the distinction of having the greatest loss of life from a hurricane," a Nags Head resident wrote to the local paper, expressing not community opinion but rather the greatest source of community dissension, "or we can call a halt to more building until we can guarantee evacuation to our visitors and permanent residents."

Of course, there was no moratorium on building; quite the contrary. And two years passed before the county figured out it required more than sixteen hours' "clearance time" to

get people off the Banks and that even minimal hurricanes would flood vast portions of the region, closing most roads, including miles of the vital mainland corridors. A plan called Decision Arc—a mandatory evacuation system—was adopted. Based on the estimated arrival time—say 6 P.M. tomorrow—of gale-force winds, which make travel nightmarish, emergency management coordinators count backward sixteen hours, and when that moment arrives they sound the alarm. Once the alarm is sounded, everybody's got to go, or so it is written.

If islanders were easily spooked, if tourists weren't pawns to curiosity, if more than a few surviving old-timers knew the merciless heart of an unforgiving storm, perhaps that would be all there was to it. More than any other response, though, there's always been a sense of routine to bad storms on the Outer Banks. All hurricanes, a local historian named Ben Dixon MacNeill wrote in 1956, are expected to pass off Cape Hatteras, grazing on the warmth of the Gulf Stream. Islanders just don't believe the worst could happen to them.

FOR THOSE ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERN COAST, HURRICANES WILL MEAN NOTHING UNTIL THEY MEAN EVERYTHING

It seldom has. Hatteras hasn't been walloped by a Category 3 hurricane (111- to 130-mph winds; 8- to 12-foot storm surge) since 1944; it's never known the unrelenting assault of a Category 4 (131- to 155-mph winds; 12- to 18-foot storm surge) or the total defeat of a Category 5 (156+-mph winds; 18+-foot storm surge) goliath, at least not since 1871, when accurate records began being kept. The closest call came in October 1954, when Hurricane Hazel, a "mild" Category 4 storm, demolished neighbors to the island's south. The Weather Service filed this report:

> Wind-driven tides devastated the immediate ocean front from the South Carolina line to Cape Lookout. All traces of civilization on that portion of the waterfront were practically annihilated. Grass-covered dunes some 10 to 20 feet high and behind which beach homes had been built in a continuous line five miles long simply disappeared, dunes, houses, and all. The paved roadway along which the houses were built was washed away (or) buried beneath several feet of sand. Of the 357 buildings which existed on Long Beach, 352 were totally destroyed and the other five damaged.

For North Carolinians on the Banks, as for most people who live in the path of nature's more harmful ways, hurricanes will mean nothing until they mean everything. Like death, a hurricane is a looming abstraction impacted deep within the inscrutable storm of existence. Only when the threat is palpable must you prepare; only when the hurricane comes will you truly know it.

It's understandable that many of the scientists and support staff at the National Hurricane Center have never experienced a hurricane firsthand, Mayfield included. They spend the hurricane season duly occupied, concerned not with the matter of what it's like but with whether it will develop and where it will head. Most days it's business as usual—numbers crunch, images intensify and fade. But once a storm is anthropomorphized with a name (alphabetical lists alternating men's and women's names are established beforehand in a six-year cycle, then reused), things change around the office, the mood takes a commensurate swing up. With raison d'être comes passion; there's an aesthetic leap forward, especially as the eye—Earth's most startling metaphor for itself—blossoms. It's complicated, this love—not the militarist's infatuation with firepower but the absolute embrace of mechanism and methodology dazzled into transcendent moments by a natural phenomenon—ordered chaos—that appears to flirt across a subjective threshold. Is the storm alive? Can it be understood?

Such was the sense of things around the NHC in September 1988, when Hurricane Gilbert, a gigantic brawler, began punching out lights across the Caribbean in contention for the storm-of-the-century title. Once the NHC's storm-track projections targeted Galveston, Texas, as the most likely place for landfall, I hopped a plane for Texas.

Aboard the flight, conversation was as you might expect. "Those eyes," the fellow sitting in front of me said, "they can get big," 5 to 25 miles wide. "There are birds in there, trapped, being pushed along, thousands of miles." He had meditated on the meaning of this and found it to be a wonder. He was an Air Force meteorologist, it turned out, and had flown hurricane hunters—reconnaissance planes equipped as flying laboratories and sent up by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to collect firsthand evidence of a storm's intensity, speed, and direction. I had talked sometime before with a pilot of a hurricane hunter at the NHC, and he'd vividly described for me his encounter with an unwanted thrill—flying into the eye of a Pacific typhoon. The plane burst through the wall of the eye at 10,000 feet. Three seconds

ater, the altimeter read 5,500 feet. *Yeah*, he had told me, his eyes hard and bright, *straight down, 4,500 feet, like dropping off a cliff. One out of every fifteen penetrations you get the living crap kicked out of you.* But the pilot left no doubt that the kick was worth it, the way he talked: Busting into the eye at 10,000 feet, there was a fishbowl effect, the marbled walls towering up to 50,000 or 60,000 feet in brilliant sunshine, beautifully cantilevered, so that *you might actually think*, he enthused, *you're sitting in Yankee Stadium.*

On our approach to Houston Intercontinental Airport, I looked south across an endless gauze sheet of cirrocumulus, parchment thin, reflecting a platinum haze onto the city. Where the coastline should have been—Houston is only about 45 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico—white seams of cornrowed altocumulus fed in from the distance, and, farther off, a brocade of pea-sized thunderheads had been stitched along the hemline of infinity. Beyond that were lavender and violet symptoms of bruising, and an eerie sense of substance without an accompanying sense of form. It was breathtakingly surreal, that sky.

Inside the terminal I discovered that during the flight Gilbert's expected travel plans had been revised, shifted farther south toward Corpus Christi. I rented a car and made for San Antonio, hoping to convince an old friend, a retired sea captain and veteran of countless blows by the name of Tay Maltsberger, to come along. The Houston radio stations were obsessed with reports of price gouging—plywood being the favored material of extortion. As I neared San Antonio, I tuned in to a local meteorologist, a twanging, slaphappy country boy named Judd. "Hurricanes are a pleasure to watch and a pleasure to be a part of," Judd crowed. "Stay tuned. We'll continue to have a lot of fun."

Captain Tay himself was ready for a break in the ordinary. He packed a seabag, I parked my rental car in his driveway—I had been forced to sign an agreement with the leasing company, promising to pay for any storm damage incurred—and we boarded his Detroit dinosaur, a vintage Lincoln Continental low-rider, decrepit but trustworthy and solid, as fine a storm car as you could ask for, and proceeded south on Interstate 37, headed for Corpus Christi. Judd was back on the radio, delighted that soon the coastal rivers would be running in both directions, as storm tides battled upstream. Past the city limits, we became the sole proprietors of the southbound lanes. Across the median, steady traffic turtled north, family heirlooms strapped to roof carriers. It was my dream highway, the highway of my adolescence, speeding to the beach on an empty road.

Captain Tay, a nomad of the tropics for most of his life, recalled for me with scant affection the hurricanes he'd endured: Flossie in '55 in New Orleans. Gracie in '59. What's-her-name in '63, while he was renovating an estate house in Antigua. He had tied himself to a tree before the storm hit, thinking such intimate investigation of the forthcoming event was harmonious with his style of life. I asked how it was.

"Wet. Stupid. Horrible." The incentive was to *see*, but the rain blew with such acrimonious volume he might as well have been underwater with his eyes shut.

By 6 P.M., Captain Tay and I were 40 miles north of the Gulf Coast. Gilbert's projected landfall was now off toward Brownsville, which meant that Corpus Christi, situated in the front right quadrant of the hurricane's track, would take the brunt of the impact—the highest winds and tides—as the spinning buzz saw of the storm bit into the coast. Squalls were visible to the southwest; on cue, we were raked by an enfilade of furious rain. We listened to Corpus Christi radio announce that so far the evacuation had been orderly but



Photograph by Kevin Vandivier / Black Star

was getting frantic. Winds were gusting at 35 mph; radio listeners were advised *not* to evacuate if the winds increased.

Northbound traffic had thinned to a trickle; southbound, it was only us. Something we never even saw blew into our windshield and cracked it. Resisted by gingery winds, we entered a city seemingly abandoned to its emergency services. Not immediately evident, though, were the 250,000 residents who had opted to stay put—an underclass with nowhere to run, along with the normal mix of diehards, vigilantes loading up for looters, flakes only now figuring out something was amiss, small businessmen with no margin of absolution, the machos and the indifferent, the partyers and the windsurfers. Everybody else in town was part of an impromptu reunion of samurai media correspondents. Waterfront parking lots were crammed with humming Skylink units—RVs and panel trucks toting satellite dishes, converted into traveling production booths for microwave transmission, poised to beam the disaster back home to Wichita or Atlanta or Montreal.

A pretty sunset graced the Gulf of Mexico: a royal mountain range of cumulus fanned by luminous golden valleys of failing light; a disembodied rainbow sprouting tenuous legs. An overpowering aroma of churned seawater, deliciously ominous, ventilated the humid city. Cars promenaded merrily down Bayshore Drive, their occupants rubbernecking the sailboat garden being planted with haste in the park between the road and the hotels, the boats craned out of their slips at the municipal marina and lodged keel-first in trenches dug with a backhoe. It was Thursday night. Landfall was scheduled for Friday daylight, probably late morning. By this time tomorrow, I thought, those boats will have made use of the storm surge to check themselves into a room at the nearby Sheraton. Captain Tay and I found a vacancy in the Holiday Inn at the backside of town and fell asleep, expecting the storm to wake us.

But it didn't. Punctuality has never been a trait of hurricanes. Their winds pack a decibel level suggestive of a low-flying squadron of throttled-down jets; I awoke instead to a whispering sunrise and a relatively balmy day. Gilbert had hesitated, although, according to the NHC, he remained betrothed to Corpus Christi.

Indeed, shortly after 9 A.M. the city was treated to a vanguard squall. In the dining room of the waterfront Sheraton, commandeered by the media, a communal surge of adrenaline had the happy result of making a hotel breakfast interesting. Selected network underlings were ordered into their oilskins and sent outdoors to aim cameras at the turbulent Gulf. Technicians fussed over black trunks of expensive gear. News squads powwowed nervously: A United States city was about to be obliterated. Then, *boom!* The first rainband enveloped us, a deafening cataract that halted conversation as two inches of water came bucketing down.

The room cleared, the tribe advancing on the Emergency Operations Center in the basement of City Hall, where workers sandbagged the doors. Except for a handful of bums being polled by TV guys, downtown streets sat deserted, but out on Bayshore and Ocean drives, a busy day—a holiday—raveled and unraveled in sync with the weather. In the middle of an extended lull, lovers strolled, parents romped with young children, dogs exercised, joggers tucked their heads to brace against the occasional blast. Skateboarders invented spinnakers with plastic garbage bags and sailed the sidewalks. Citizens had flocked to the shoreline to welcome the tempest, and by noon, when the windsurfers struggled down the cliffs and into the boiling waves, sending up a cheer, Corpus Christi had itself a strangely wholesome county fair. Nobody seemed to have a clue what the hurricane was doing, but everybody loved it—and one another—so far.

By 2 P.M., Gilbert lay 260 miles south of Corpus Christi. Winds gusting to 50 mph rocked Captain Tay as he stood sentinel at McGee Beach, inhaling the raw, jungly smell of the atmosphere and growing nostalgic, watching the water whiten as his past blew up to him: He and I had both lived on the same island off the coast of Nicaragua when Hurricane Fifi corkscrewed past in '74. Now the horizon turned mulberry black, street signs began to shake with poltergeists, the rains stampeded horizontally, and within the hour tropical-storm conditions prevailed. As promised by the mayor, police stationed along Shoreline Boulevard shooed sightseers indoors. Eleven emergency shelters filled up with believers.

It was nearly impossible to find storm information on the radio, except in Spanish. By midafternoon, though, with roads flooding and visibility less than a mile, we knew the storm had locked us in place, no matter what. Then came the news: The hurricane had declined to make the northward adjustment that had been so insistently predicted during the previous twenty-four hours. Instead, between 2 and 3 P.M., with winds of 120 mph, Gilbert plowed straight ahead into Mexico, more than 100 miles south of Brownsville, scattering tornadoes like a burst piñata.

A final onslaught of dense rain reduced vis ility to zero. The local radio confirmed a rnado sighting. Captain Tay and I drove to a quor store and bought a bottle from an chausted cashier, his till fat with money. For s the storm was over, but for the countries irther impoverished by $5 billion in damges, for the relatives of the dead in Jamaica d Mexico, for the hundreds of thousands of people left homeless and destitute, the storm would never be over.

"Florida *needs* a hurricane," I often hear s citizens say, bemoaning the state's overdelopment, and perhaps if Hurricane Hugo uld have been auctioned off, Miami or ampa would have gotten Hugo, and his 7 billion mirror for soul-searching, instead Charleston, South Carolina.

From September 16 to 22, 1989, Hurricane lugo decimated the islands of Guadeloupe, lontserrat, St. Croix, St. John's, and St. homas with 140-mph winds and peak gusts round 155 mph, then hammered Charleston nd its surrounding low country (with the ighest storm surge recorded anywhere on the ast Coast in this century—19.8 feet) and hewed up the Grand Strand of Myrtle Beach. Iugo's notoriety was such that meteorologists tired his name from their lists, the first statede hurricane to be inducted into ruination's all of fame since Camille in 1969.

But the language of catastrophe is depressngly uniform; profiles in terror are delivered the voice of Everyman. One ravished comunity becomes all ravished communities; one utilated environment easily resembles the ext. Businesses and dwellings *nowhere* to be ound; "beautiful white beach houses turned nside out and stacked 30 and 40 feet high"; oads undermined, sections of bridge collapsed; he toppled trees blanketing crushed cars, the nes left standing stripped entirely of their oliage, the infrastructure ruptured—no electricity, no water, no phones, no sewerage; surivors wandering like zombies through the vreckage; the pooled mud and oppressive heat nd "sick yellow" sky; dozens of wild boars vashed in from the barrier islands, floating lead at the water's edge; the air rotten because there were so many dead things round"; chain-link fences collaged with leath, their mesh stuffed with birds. Not Hugo nd Charleston, though the description fits, ut Camille and Gulfport, Mississippi.

In her book *Hatteras Journal*, naturalist writer Jan DeBlieu recalled a friend's ordeal during Hurricane Gloria in 1985. The man had remained in a house in Avon, a few miles north of Cape Hatteras, and taken notes as the storm swept ashore. No longer able to tolerate the shrillness of the wind, he had jammed tissue in his ears. The house droned with vibration; objects, like the refrigerator, walked themselves around. Waves began pounding the third floor windows. He put on a life preserver and wrote: "I feel very much alone. House moving badly. Phone dead. House being blasted. Big boat hitting house. Wind won't die. Can hear lumber cracking and breaking. House might go down. Helpless." And finally, nine hours later: "It will subside."

On Hatteras the consensus on Gloria was that the hurricane hadn't wised anybody up, a sentiment underscored by Charley the following year. Development had boomed, if anything, after both storms, as if they had miraculously disaster-proofed the Outer Banks. By the time I left Hatteras in 1987, the island had its first ever liquor store and shopping mall. In 1986 canal lots west of Highway 12 sold for $15,000; by 1989 they were worth $65,000. The notion worked its way into the common viewpoint of old-time residents with modest incomes: It'd be nice if a *real* hurricane cleared this place out.

ON HATTERAS THE HURRICANES HADN'T WISED ANYBODY UP. DEVELOPMENT HAD BOOMED AFTER BOTH STORMS

Jan DeBlieu herself had evacuated during Gloria, but she knew how her friends who stayed had suffered, she wasn't naive about storms. A month before Hatteras itself was placed under the umbrella of Hugo's hurricane warning, I had heard the bottom line from her one night at dinner.

"Saying that I want a major hurricane to hit the Outer Banks is, I suppose, grasping at straws," she said. "But the environmental pressures, the overdevelopment, have to be reversed, and nothing seems to be working." So . . . yes, DeBlieu wanted a hurricane to hit. Yes, she wanted major destruction. Yes, she admitted, as a radical ecologist she had to say that if there were deaths from the storm, that would be even better, more emphatic. "I don't say these things lightly," she added. The pattern of human involvement with the shoreline had to change, "even if it means people like me have to leave our property and go somewhere else; that we all admit the ecosystem of these islands is fragile and only meant to support the people who were here before modern development. You treat a dog dying of heartworms with arsenic. You drive a car differently after you wreck one."

Hard medicine, this remedy of hurricanes. South Carolina had had to swallow it, and I



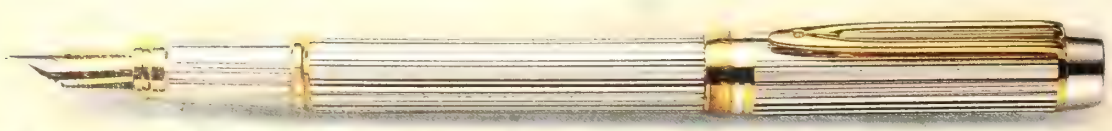
When you closed the deal on the Barrington estate,
I was grateful.

When you made my son a summer associate in your firm,
I was quite pleased.

The surprise party you threw for my fiftieth
made me very happy, indeed.

But when you gave my employees a Waterman for Christmas,
I was speechless.

You've finally impressed me, old boy.



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anted to see for myself how it had gone own. Nine months after Hugo rammed head- into the coast I visited Charleston, driving p to North Carolina first for an orientation ssion with Orrin Pilkey, a coastal geologist ho directs the Program for the Study of eveloped Shorelines at Duke University in urham. Pilkey, a good-humored conserva- onist who enjoys stirring up trouble, has allenged—and in some cases has helped ange—the way many state and local govern- ents perceive the coast. His converts are idespread; he receives a lot of hate mail. If he ere king, he likes to say, he'd bulldoze any uilding within 100 meters of the shoreline, onsequently saving taxpayers hundreds of illions of dollars in insurance paybacks while nsuring that there'll be beaches around for e nation's grandchildren.

"Compared with the number of people who ant to use the beach, the number who have uilt right next to it is very small," Pilkey told e, "so the hell with them. There's not much od you can say about these people. They uild in a very dangerous place, they are sponsible for the big expenditure of flood surance, they make access to the beach dif- cult for the public, and they make the beach gly."

He cited an axiom of coastal geology, olan's Dilemma: Whatever you do to a beach protect yourself (creating artificial dunes, awalls, groins) will bear responsibility for our eventual demise, since it undermines the each's natural ability to renourish itself. After he Big One comes, Pilkey's confident that all ates will refuse to allow people to rebuild on he beach after hurricanes.

The disaster Pilkey anticipates—and most urricane experts agree with the scenario— ill be a Category 4 or 5 storm that kills thou- ands in the Florida Keys or hits Pinellas County, filling Tampa Bay and blowing out he drawbridges. Hugo, mean as he was, was ot a persuasive advocate of retreat.

Yet, as Pilkey saw it, South Carolina seemed o be "doing all the right things." Not a single ew seawall had been built since the storm; xisting walls were condemned to a phase-out lan; and earlier legislation had reduced the ikelihood of high-rise construction.

But even as we talked, the South Carolina tate legislature was backing down from the igh ground by loosening restrictions on prop- rty owners whose lots had been rendered nbuildable by the 1988 Beachfront Manage- nent Act. In addition, the legislature exempt- d Folly Beach—southeast of the city and tarved for sand by the jetty protecting Charleston Harbor—from the act's restric- tions, basically freeing the Hugo-bashed peninsula to stabilize itself in whatever man- ner, however problematic, it found necessary and expedient.

Pilkey called Folly Beach the worst, most mismanaged beach in the Southeast, so there's where I drove after I left him, making for the coast, picking up Highway 17, the coastal route, at Myrtle Beach and steering south toward Charleston. Though it had been almost a year since the storm, the road could still lead a traveler into a state of hurricane-induced sobriety. The working-class towns of McClellanville and Awendaw, situated direct- ly north of Hugo's eye, endured the worst sustained winds estimated at 138 mph, peak gusts at 179 mph, a storm surge of 17 feet— and were the slowest to recover. McClel- lanville's houses were still shells, the town's streets ramparted with sickeningly tall mounds of rubble. People had been trapped in their houses here, their furniture floating around them. Then the houses themselves had come unmoored and floated. Mile after mile, the roadside of 17 was leveed with the vestiges of apocalypse: houses piled into splin- tered cones, bathtubs and toilets, appliances, sofas and chairs and mattresses, carpets and drywall and shingles—everything, the frame and the skin of the low country's former self, all the mundane fixings and furnishings of life, resonating not tragedy as much as the dull hum of pathos.

The scarred logs that had been cut out of crushed roofs and stacked on the shoulder of the road foreshadowed the profoundly numb- ing sight of the blowdown in the Francis Mari- on National Forest. Some 70 percent of the trees in this 250,000-acre forest 30 miles north of Charleston were pushed over, snapped off, or cracked into perfect angles: You could drive for an hour and see nothing but a loblolly pine forest of triangles and amputated timber. (In the past year, the Forest Service has lost a con- siderable part of the surviving stand to a stress- related beetle infestation.) The astronomical blowdown had left behind the most dangerous wildfire potential the state has ever seen. "Even *now*, after seeing it every day for nine months," forest ranger Erin Bronk told me, "we drive out there and can't believe our eyes." A national forest devastated.

Not so Charleston and the elite beach com- munities out on the barrier islands. There, as I discovered, the original storm surge had been chased by a three-stage surge of money: first, to repair the infrastructure; second, to clear the debris; and third, to rebuild in style—all stages expensive and all heavily subsidized by taxpayers through federal flood insurance and

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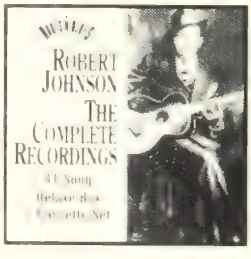
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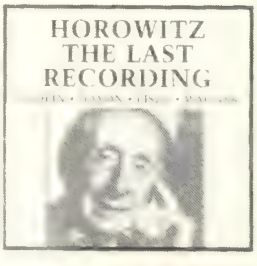
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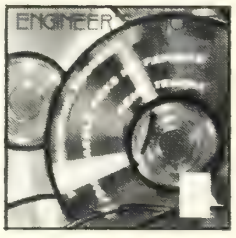
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disaster assistance. The hurricane had been a catalyst for renewal, sure—renewal not of the environmental order (so much for deep ecology) but of the modern American's way of life. What the storm did, according to Christopher Brooks, deputy director of the South Carolina Coastal Council, was destroy a lot of older, poorer construction on the coast. Hurricanes, it would follow, function as hard-to-please building inspectors, regulating the physical standards of growth without making definitive statements about growth's right to persevere.

Charleston and its surrounding shorelines were prospering. "Overall," said Brooks, who was trained as an economist, "I think we'll come out ahead." There was no fire sale—real-estate values had held. The city was chock-full of carpetbaggers—construction crews from Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Massachusetts; entrepreneurs pouring out of the woodwork. "I've never seen so many creative people with so many schemes," a city government official told me. It was the proverbial triumph of the human spirit over adversity, but it was something less, something tawdry too, because there was so much money to be made. By the time the army of insurance claims adjusters—known in the trade as storm troopers—had burned out and retreated, construction-material costs had tripled and the boom was on.

Not long after reaching Folly Beach—if the worst beach on the southeastern coast, certainly the best named—I pulled over to help a vehicle stuck in the sand of a leveled, debris-strewn oceanfront lot and there met Jimmy Simmons, an ex-Marine with a Southerner's childlike smile and lidded eyes.

"You lose your home here?" I asked.

"Naw," he said. "Mine's this one here next to it, still standing."

He invited me in for a taste of Carolina hospitality—Coca-Cola and home cooking and shooting the bull. Inside, he introduced me to his wife—"This is Leona Helmsley; boy, she don't let me get away with nothing"—to his grown-up daughter, and waved at his sunburned grandchildren, playing cards at the kitchen table. Out the front windows the view was of artificial dune, a rock seawall, a dying beach still littered with glass shards and chunks of concrete. Beyond was the magnificent, ever spellbinding ocean blue. We sat down and were served our Cokes. It was 102 degrees outside, but in Mr. Simmons's unpretentious house I felt cool with a sense of belonging. One of those noisy card cheaters at the table could have been me, thirty years ago, savoring the best of times I had ever known with my family, in a rented cottage at Nags Head or Virginia Beach or Ocean City, Maryland.

I sat there and listened to Jimmy Simmons talk about Folly Beach, which he had been coming to since he was a kid, and about the hurricane:

"As far as the hurricane goes," he began, "it's going to improve Folly Beach 100 percent. It's bringing a lot of people over here that's got money. When money comes into an area, it improves, you know, everything improves. Yeah, taxes are going to go up. I pay taxes on two lots myself—I have one lot out there in the ocean, supposed to be a road between that one and the one I'm on.

"I think this hurricane relieved a lot of people's minds," he went on to say. "I've always been reluctant to put money into this house, thinking that the Big One was going to take it away, but I don't feel that way anymore. We just finished getting the house back together, been working on it twelve hours a day. I always thought I was pretty tough, but after going around and looking at the town I said, I've had it, I don't want to see anymore, I don't want to hear anymore, I don't even want to think about it. It was too much destruction. You close your mind to it.

"Things have changed in my lifetime, but I like it better now. *You* have the attitude I had twenty years ago. I felt like going out on the highway and putting up roadblocks to stop the growth. Then I ended putting up a shopping center here. Why should you and me sit here enjoying all this for ourselves? Other people are entitled to it, too."

I am grateful to Mrs. Simmons for her fine cherry pie and to Jimmy Simmons for his fundamental decency, but we haven't so much in common, finally, except good intentions and the fact that we can both boast of a long courtship with the coast. Yet he stayed on, and I've mostly fled. I envy him the sea outside his living room windows. I know, though, that if I lingered in a place like Folly Beach, or myriad other towns along the shore, I would become rich in hatred for the outrages so enthusiastically committed.

Orrin Pilkey had told me that a Hugo or a Camille would loop Hatteras Island right back to the 1920s, before the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed the artificial dune line that muffled the barrier island's innate instability, making development possible.

Well, that's great, I tell myself wistfully, but I wasn't born then, I can't travel back through time, even if the beach can. And as an American, I can no longer imagine a beach so pure and empty that I'm not somewhere on it, minding the blank horizon, waiting for the wind to rise, the storm to wake me—another fool, gambling it will never come. ■

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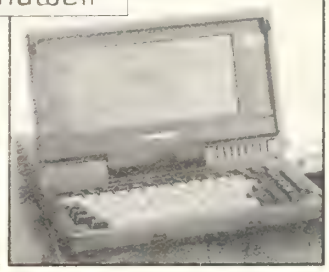
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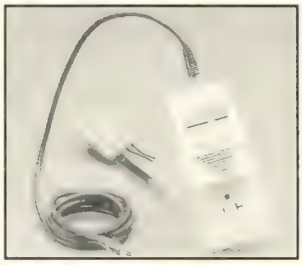
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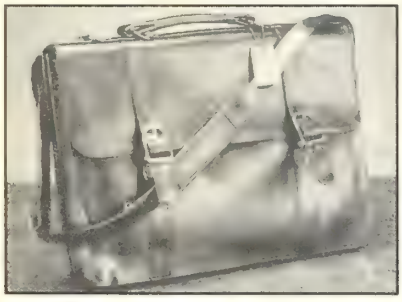
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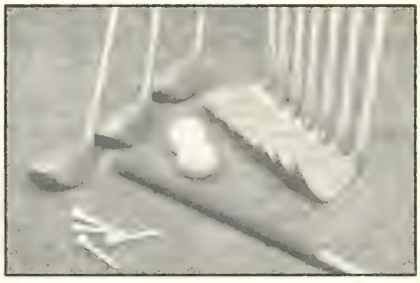
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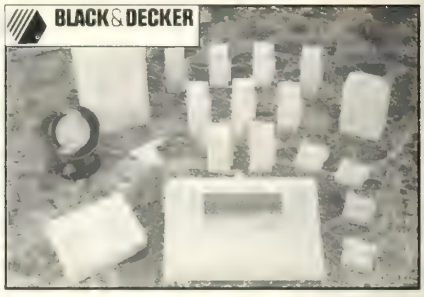
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WHAT'S WRONG WITH ANIMAL RIGHTS

Of hounds, horses, and Jeffersonian happiness

By Vicki Hearne

Not all happy animals are alike. A Doberman going over a hurdle after a small wooden dumbbell is sleek, all arcs of harmonious power. A basset hound cheerfully performing the same exercise exhibits harmonies of a more lugubrious nature. There are chimpanzees who love precision the way musicians or fanatical housekeepers or accomplished hypochondriacs do; others for whom happiness is a matter of invention and variation—chimp vaudevillians. There is a rhinoceros whose happiness, as near as I can make out, is in needing to be trained every morning, all over again, or else he "forgets" his circus routine, and in this you find a clue to the slow, deep, quiet chuckle of his happiness and to the glory of the beast. Happiness for Secretariat is in his ebullient bound, that joyful length of stride. For the draft horse or the weight-pull dog, happiness is of a different shape, more awesome and less obviously intelligent. When the pulling horse is at its most intense, the animal goes into himself, allocating all of the educated power that organizes his desire to dwell in fierce and delicate intimacy with that power, leans into the harness, and MAKES THAT SUCKER MOVE.

If we are speaking of human beings and use the phrase "animal happiness," we tend to mean something like "creature comforts." The emblems of this are the golden retriever rolling in the grass, the horse with his nose deep in the oats, the kitty by the fire. Creature comforts are important to animals—"Grub first, then ethics" is a motto that would describe many a wise Labrador retriever, and I have a pit bull named Annie whose continual quest for the perfect pillow inspires her to awesome feats. But there is something more to animals, a capacity for satisfactions that come from work in the fullest sense—what is known in philosophy and in this country's Declaration of Independence as "happiness." This is a sense of

Vicki Hearne is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine, *an animal trainer, and the author of* Bandit: Dossier of a Dangerous Dog, *which will be published in November by HarperCollins. Her last piece for* Harper's Magazine, *"Beware of the Dog!" appeared in the February 1986 issue.*

WORK IS THE FOUNDATION OF HAPPINESS A TRAINER AND AN ANIMAL DISCOVER TOGETHER

personal achievement, like the satisfaction felt by a good wood-carver or a dancer or a poet or an accomplished dressage horse. It is a happiness that, like the artist's, must come from something within the animal, something trainers call "talent." Hence, it cannot be imposed on the animal. But it is also something that does not come *ex nihilo*. If it had not been a fairly ordinary thing, in one part of the world, to teach young children to play the pianoforte, it is doubtful that Mozart's music would exist.

Happiness is often misunderstood as a synonym for pleasure or as an antonym for suffering. But Aristotle associated happiness with ethics—codes of behavior that urge us toward the sensation of getting it right, a kind of work that yields the "click" of satisfaction upon solving a problem or surmounting an obstacle. In his *Ethics*, Aristotle wrote, "If happiness is activity in accordance with excellence, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest excellence." Thomas Jefferson identified the capacity for happiness as one of the three fundamental rights on which all others are based: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

I bring up this idea of happiness as a form of work because I am an animal trainer, and work is the foundation of the happiness a trainer and an animal discover together. I bring up these words also because they cannot be found in the lexicon of the animal-rights movement. This absence accounts for the uneasiness toward the movement of most people, who sense that rights advocates have a point but take it too far when they liberate snails or charge that goldfish at the county fair are suffering. But the problem with the animal-rights advocates is not that they take it too far; it's that they've got it all wrong.

Animal rights are built upon a misconceived premise that rights were created to prevent us from unnecessary suffering. You can't find an animal-rights book, video, pamphlet, or rock concert in which someone doesn't mention the Great Sentence, written by Jeremy Bentham in 1789. Arguing in favor of such rights, Bentham wrote: "The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, can they *talk*? but, can they suffer?"

The logic of the animal-rights movement places suffering at the iconographic center of a skewed value system. The thinking of its proponents—given eerie expression in a virtually sado-pornographic sculpture of a tortured monkey that won a prize for its compassionate vision—has collapsed into a perverse conundrum. Today the loudest voices calling for—demanding—the destruction of animals are the humane organizations. This is an inevitable consequence of the apotheosis of the drive to relieve suffering: Death is the ultimate release. To compensate for their contradictions, the humane movement has demonized, in this century and the last, those who made animal happiness their business: veterinarians, trainers, and the like. We think of Louis Pasteur as the man whose work saved you and me and your dog and cat from rabies, but antivivisectionists of the time claimed that rabies increased in areas where there were Pasteur Institutes.

An anti-rabies public-relations campaign mounted in England in the 1880s by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and other organizations led to orders being issued to club any dog found not wearing a muzzle. England still has her cruel and unnecessary law that requires an animal to spend six months in quarantine before being allowed loose in the country. Most of the recent propaganda about pit bulls—the crazy claim that they "take hold with their front teeth while they chew away with their rear teeth" (which would imply, incorrectly, that they have double jaws)—can be traced to literature published by the Humane Society of the United States during the fall of 1987 and earlier. If your neighbors want your dog or horse impounded and destroyed because he is a nuisance—say the dog barks, or the horse attracts flies—it will be the local Humane Society to whom your neighbors turn for action.

Illustrations by Deborah Ross

THE WILD IS NOT A SUFFERING-FREE ZONE OR ALL THAT FROLICSOME A LOCATION

In a way, everyone has the opportunity to know that the history of the umane movement is largely a history of miseries, arrests, prosecutions, nd death. The Humane Society is the pound, the place with the decom-ression chamber or the lethal injections. You occasionally find worried :tters about this in Ann Landers's column.

Animal-rights publications are illustrated largely with photographs of wo kinds of animals—"Helpless Fluff" and "Agonized Fluff," the two onditions in which some people seem to prefer their animals, because ny other version of an animal is too complicated for propaganda. In the ntroduction to his book *Animal Liberation*, Peter Singer says somewhat nugly that he and his wife have no animals and, in fact, don't much care or them. This is offered as evidence of his objectivity and ethical probity. ut it strikes me as an odd, perhaps obscene, underpinning for an ethical project that encourages university and high school students to cherish their ignorance of, say, great bird dogs as proof of their devotion to animals.

I would like to leave these philosophers behind, for they are inept connoisseurs of suffering who might revere my Airedale for his capacity to :ream when subjected to a blowtorch but not for his wit and courage, not or his natural good manners that are a gentle rebuke to ours. I want to elebrate the moment not long ago when, at his first dog show, my ıiredale, Drummer, learned that there can be a public place where his 'ork is respected. I want to celebrate his meticulousness, his happiness pon realizing at the dog show that no one would swoop down upon him nd swamp him with the goo-goo excesses known as the "teddy-bear com-lex" but that people actually got out of his way, gave him room to work. I ant to say, "There can be a six-and-a-half-month-old puppy who can are about accuracy, who can be fastidious, and whose fastidiousness will e a foundation for courage later." I want to say, "Leave my puppy alone!"

I want to leave the philosophers behind, but I cannot, in part because the hilosophical problems that plague academicians of the animal-rights move-ıent are illuminating. They wonder, do animals have rights or do they have ıterests? Or, if these rightists lead particularly unexamined lives, they dis-ıiss that question as obvious (yes, of course, animals have rights, prima ıcie) and proceed to enumerate them, James Madison style. This leads to he issuance of bills of rights—the right to an environment, the right not to e used in medical experiments—and other forms of trivialization.

The calculus of suffering can be turned against the philosophers of fes-ering flesh, even in the case of food animals, or exotic animals who per-orm in movies and circuses. It is true that it hurts to be slaughtered by ıan, but it doesn't hurt nearly as much as some of the cunningly cruel rrangements meted out by "Mother Nature." In Africa, 75 percent of the ions cubbed do not survive to the age of two. For those who make it to wo, the average age at death is ten years. Asali, the movie and TV ioness, was still working at age twenty-one. There are fates worse than eath, but twenty-one years of a close working relationship with Hubert Vells, Asali's trainer, is not one of them. Dorset sheep and polled Here-ords would not exist at all were they not in a symbiotic relationship with ıuman beings.

A human being living in the "wild"—somewhere, say, without the ben-fits of medicine and advanced social organization—would probably have life expectancy of from thirty to thirty-five years. A human being living n "captivity"—in, say, a middle-class neighborhood of what the Centers or Disease Control call a Metropolitan Statistical Area—has a life xpectancy of seventy or more years. For orangutans in the wild in Borneo nd Malaysia, the life expectancy is thirty-five years; in captivity, fifty ears. The wild is not a suffering-free zone or all that frolicsome a location.

The questions asked by animal-rights activists are flawed, because they re built on the concept that the origin of rights is in the avoidance of



WHAT KIND OF THING AIREDALE, DRUMMER, HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF?



suffering rather than in the pursuit of happiness. The question that needs to be asked—and that will put us in closer proximity to the truth—is not, do they have rights? or, what are those rights? but rather, what is a right?

Rights originate in committed relationships and can be found, both intact and violated, wherever one finds such relationships—in social compacts, within families, between animals, and between people and nonhuman animals. This is as true when the nonhuman animals in question are lions or parakeets as when they are dogs. It is my Airedale whose excellencies have my attention at the moment, so it is with reference to him that I will consider the question, what is a right?

When I imagine situations in which it naturally arises that A defends or honors or respects B's rights, I imagine situations in which the relationship between A and B can be indicated with a possessive pronoun. I might say, "Leave her alone, she's my daughter" or, "That's what she wants, and she is my daughter. I think I am bound to honor her wants." Similarly, "Leave her alone, she's my mother." I am more tender of the happiness of my mother, my father, my child, than I am of other people's family members; more tender of my friends' happinesses than your friends' happinesses, unless you and I have a mutual friend.

Possession of a being by another has come into more and more disrepute, so that the common understanding of one person possessing another is slavery. But the important detail about the kind of possessive pronoun that I have in mind is reciprocity: If I have a friend, she has a friend. If I have a daughter, she has a mother. The possessive does not bind one of us while freeing the other; it cannot do that. Moreover, should the mother reject the daughter, the word that applies is "disown." The form of disowning that most often appears in the news is domestic violence. Parents abuse children; husbands batter wives.

Some cases of reciprocal possessives have built-in limitations, such as "my patient / my doctor" or "my student / my teacher" or "my agent / my client." Other possessive relations are extremely limited but still remarkably binding: "my neighbor" and "my country" and "my president."

The responsibilities and the ties signaled by reciprocal possession typically are hard to dissolve. It can be as difficult to give up an enemy as to give up a friend, and often the one becomes the other, as though the logic of the possessive pronoun outlasts the forms it chanced to take at a given moment, as though we were stuck with one another. In these bindings, nearly inextricable, are found the origin of our rights. They imply a possessiveness but also recognize an acknowledgment by each side of the other's existence.

The idea of democracy is dependent on the citizens' having knowledge of the government; that is, realizing that the government exists and knowing how to claim rights against it. I know this much because I get mail from the government and see its "representatives" running about in uniforms. Whether I actually have any rights in relationship to the government is less clear, but the idea that I do is symbolized by the right to vote. I obey the government, and, in theory, it obeys me, by counting my ballot, reading the *Miranda* warning to me, agreeing to be bound by the Constitution. My friend obeys me as I obey her; the government "obeys" me to some extent, and, to a different extent, I obey it.

What kind of thing can my Airedale, Drummer, have knowledge of? He can know that I exist and through that knowledge can claim his happinesses, with varying degrees of success, both with me and against me. Drummer can also know about larger human or dog communities than the one that consists only of him and me. There is my household—the other dogs, the cats, my husband. I have had enough dogs on campuses to know that he can learn that Yale exists as a neighborhood or village. My older dog, Annie, not only knows that Yale exists but can tell Yalies from townies, as I learned while teaching there during labor troubles.

Dogs can have elaborate conceptions of human social structures, and

·en of something like their rights and responsibilities within them, ıt these conceptions are never elaborate enough to construct a rights ·lationship between a dog and the state, or a dog and the Humane ɔciety. Both of these are concepts that depend on writing and memo nda, officers in uniform, plaques and seals of authority. All of these e literary constructs, and all of them are beyond a dog's ken, which is why the mail carrier who doesn't also happen to be a dog's friend is forever an intruder—this is why dogs bark at mailmen.

It is clear enough that natural rights relations can arise between peo- e and animals. Drummer, for example, can insist, "Hey, let's go outside ıd do something!" if I have been at my computer several days on end. e can both refuse to accept various of my suggestions and tell me when ; tears for his life—such as the time when the huge, white flapping flag ɔpeared out of nowhere, as it seemed to him, on the town green one ening when we were working. I can (and do) say to him either, "Oh, ɔu don't have to worry about that" or, "Uh oh, you're right, Drum, that ıy looks dangerous." Just as the government and I—two different species organism—have developed improvised ways of communicating, such as ıe vote, so Drummer and I have worked out a number of ways to make ır expressions known. Largely through obedience, I have taught him a ir amount about how to get responses from me. Obedience is reciprocal; ɔu cannot get responses from a dog to whom you do not respond accu- tely. I have enfranchised him in a relationship to me by educating him, eating the conditions by which he can achieve a certain happiness spe- fic to a dog, maybe even specific to an Airedale, inasmuch as this same lationship has allowed me to plumb the happiness of being a trainer ıd writing this article.

Instructions in this happiness are given terms that are alien to a culture ı which liver treats, fluffy windup toys, and miniature sweaters are con- ısed with respect and work. Jack Knox, a sheepdog trainer originally om Scotland, will shake his crook at a novice handler who makes a ·omiscuous move to praise a dog, and will call out in his Scottish accent, Eh! Eh! Get back, get BACK! Ye'll no be abusin' the dogs like that in ıy clinic." America is a nation of abused animals, Knox says, because we ·e always swooping at them with praise, "no gi'ing them their freedom." am reminded of Rainer Maria Rilke's account in which the Prodigal on leaves—has to leave—because everyone loves him, even the dogs ɔve him, and he has no path to the delicate and fierce truth of himself. Inconditional praise and love, in Rilke's story, disenfranchise us, distract s from what truly excites our interest.

In the minds of some trainers and handlers, praise is dishonesty. Para- ɔxically, it is a kind of contempt for animals that masquerades as a rev- ·ence for helplessness and suffering. The idea of freedom means that you ɔ not, at least not while Jack Knox is nearby, helpfully guide your dog ırough the motions of, say, herding over and over—what one trainer ılls "explainy-wainy." This is rote learning. It works tolerably well on ɔme handlers, because people have vast unconscious minds and can ore complex pre-programmed behaviors. Dogs, on the other hand, have lmost no unconscious minds, so they can learn only by thinking. Many hildren are like this until educated out of it.

If I tell my Airedale to sit and stay on the town green, and someone ɔmes up and burbles, "What a pretty thing you are," he may break his ay to go for a caress. I pull him back and correct him for breaking. Now e holds his stay because I have blocked his way to movement but not ecause I have punished him. (A correction blocks one path as it opens nother for desire to work; punishment blocks desire and opens nothing.) Ie holds his stay now, and—because the stay opens this possibility of ·ork, new to a heedless young dog—he watches. If the person goes on

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DALE'S INALIENABLE RIGHTS

talking, and isn't going to gush with praise, I may heel Drummer out of his stay and give him an "Okay" to make friends. Sometimes something about the person makes Drummer feel that reserve is in order. He responds to an insincere approach by sitting still, going down into himself, and thinking, "This person has no business pawing me. I'll sit very still, and he will go away." If the person doesn't take the hint from Drummer, I'll give the pup a little backup by saying, "Please don't pet him, he's working," even though he was not under any command.

The pup reads this, and there is a flicker of a working trust now stirring in the dog. Is the pup grateful? When the stranger leaves, does he lick my hand, full of submissive blandishments? This one doesn't. This one says nothing at all, and I say nothing much to him. This is a working trust we are developing, not a mutual-congratulation society. My backup is praise enough for him; the use he makes of my support is praise enough for me.

Listening to a dog is often praise enough. Suppose it is just after dark and we are outside. Suddenly there is a shout from the house. The pup and I both look toward the shout and then toward each other: "What do you think?" I don't so much as cock my head, because Drummer is growing up, and I want to know what he thinks. He takes a few steps toward the house, and I follow. He listens again and comprehends that it's just Holly, who at fourteen is much given to alarming cries and shouts. He shrugs at me and goes about his business. I say nothing. To praise him for this performance would make about as much sense as praising a human being for the same thing. Thus:

A. What's that?
B. I don't know. [Listens] Oh, it's just Holly.
A. What a gooooooood human being!
B. Huh?

This is one small moment in a series of like moments that will culminate in an Airedale who on a Friday will have the discrimination and confidence required to take down a man who is attacking me with a knife and on Saturday clown and play with the children at the annual Orange Empire Dog Club Christmas party.

People who claim to speak for animal rights are increasingly devoted to the idea that the very keeping of a dog or a horse or a gerbil or a lion is in and of itself an offense. The more loudly they speak, the less likely they are to be in a rights relation to any given animal, because they are spending so much time in airplanes or transmitting fax announcements of the latest Sylvester Stallone anti-fur rally. In a 1988 *Harper's* forum, for example, Ingrid Newkirk, the national director of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, urged that domestic pets be spayed and neutered and ultimately phased out. She prefers, it appears, wolves—and wolves someplace else—to Airedales and, by a logic whose interior structure is both emotionally and intellectually forever closed to Drummer, claims thereby to be speaking for "animal rights."

She is wrong. I am the only one who can own up to my Airedale's inalienable rights. Whether or not I do it perfectly at any given moment is no more refutation of this point than whether I am perfectly my husband's mate at any given moment refutes the fact of marriage. Only people who know Drummer, and whom he can know, are capable of the relationship. PETA and the Humane Society and the ASPCA and the Congress and NOW—as institutions—do have the power to affect my ability to grant rights to Drummer but are otherwise incapable of creating conditions or laws or rights that would increase his happiness. Only Drummer's owner has the power to obey him—to obey who he is and what he is capable of—deeply enough to grant him his rights and open up the possibility of happiness.

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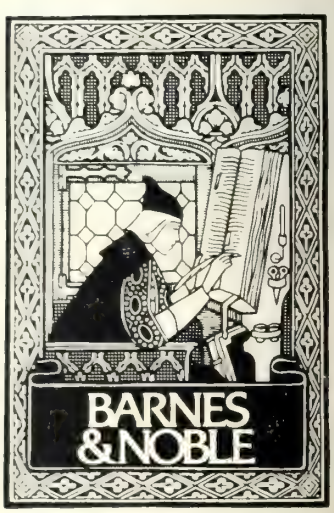
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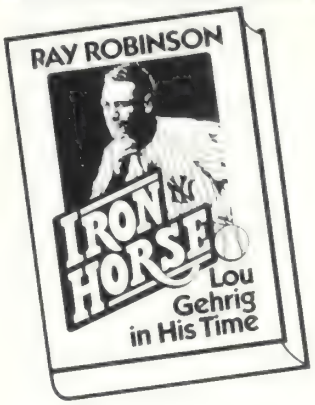
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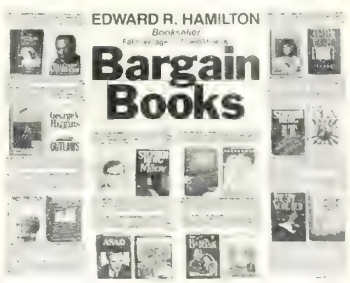
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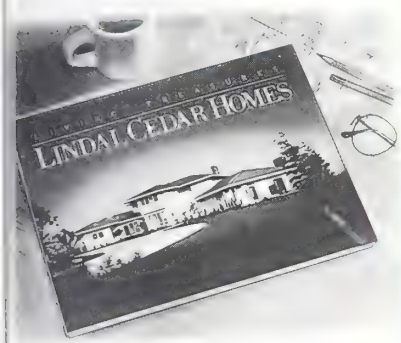
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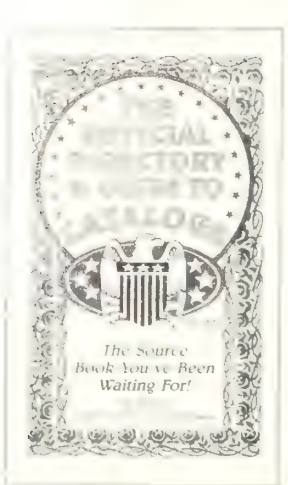
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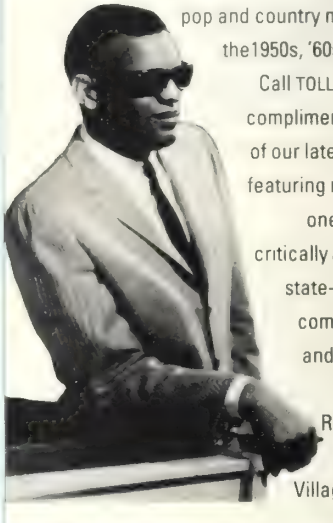


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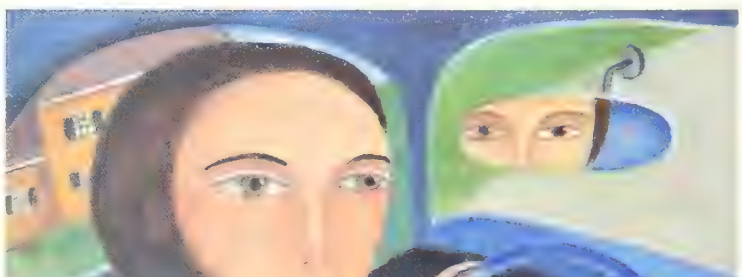
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IS LAUGHTER CONTAGIOUS?

By Joyce Carol Oates



Is laughter contagious? Driving on North Pearl Street, Franklin Village, Mrs. D. began suddenly to hear laughter on all sides, a wash of laughter gold-spangled like coins, just perceptibly louder issuing from the rear of her car, and she found herself smiling, her brooding thoughtful expression erased as if by force, on the verge of spontaneous laughter herself, for isn't there a natural buoyancy to the heart when we hear laughter? even, or particularly, the laughter of strangers? even an unexpected, inexplicable, mysterious laughter?—though Mrs. D. understood that the laughter surrounding her was in no way mysterious, at least its source was in no way mysterious, for, evidently, she had forgotten to switch off the car radio the last time she had driven the car, and the laughter was issuing from the radio's speakers, the most powerful of which was in the rear of the Mercedes.

What were they laughing about, these phantom radio-people?

Men's laughter?—and, here and there, the isolated sound of a woman's higher-pitched laughter?—delicious, cascading, like a sound of icicles touching?

Though laughing by this time herself, Mrs. D., who was a serious person, with a good deal on her mind—and most of it private, secret, not to be shared even with Mr. D.—switched the radio off, preferring silence.

There.

Christine Delahunt. Thirty-nine years old. Wife, mother. Recently returned to work—a "career." A woman of moral scruples, but not prim, puritanical, dogmatic. Isn't that how Mrs. D. has defined herself to herself? Isn't Mrs. D., in so defining herself, one of us?—determined, for no reason we can understand, to define ourselves to—ourselves?

As if we doubt that anyone else is concerned?

Mrs. D. was to tell us, certain of her friendly acquaintances. Last Thursday it seemed to begin. Did others in Franklin Village notice—that afternoon, some time before six o'clock? The time of suburban car-errands, family tasks, last-minute shopping, and pickups at the dry cleaners and drugstore, the pace of the waning day quickening, yes and Thursday is the day-preceding-Friday, when the week itself notoriously quickens, a panic-sensation to it, as a river seemingly placid and navigable begins to accelerate, visibly, as it approaches a cataract—though there is, yet, no clear sign of danger? no reason for alarm?

Outbursts of laughter. Gay infectious laughter. In the Franklin Food Mart, our "quality" grocery store, at one of the checkout counters where the deaf-and-dumb packer wearing the badge FRITZ (pasty-skinned, in his fifties; the Franklin Food Mart is one of several area businesses that have "made it a policy" to employ the handicapped) spilled a bag of fresh produce onto the floor, and Washington State winesaps, bright-dyed Florida navel oranges, hairy pungent little kiwifruit, several pygmy-heads of Boston lettuce, a dozen Idaho red potatoes, a single California melon—all went tumbling, rolling, startling yet comical as the deaf-and-dumb packer gaped and blinked, standing frozen in a kind of terror that for all its public expression seemed to us, witnessing

Joyce Carol Oates's most recent book is Heat and Other Stories. *Her story "Ladies and Gentlemen" appeared in the December 1990 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Illustration by Becky Heavne

) be private, thus somehow funnier, ıd the very customer who had paid ‹travagant prices for these items ughed, if a bit angrily; and other ıstomers, seeing, burst into laugh- r, too; and the checkout cashier, ıd other cashiers, and employees of ıe store, peering over, craning ıeir necks to see what the commo- ›n is, their laughter tentative at ·st since the look in poor Fritz's ·es was terror wasn't it?—then :ploding forth, an honest, candid, it-laughter, not malicious surely, it, yes, *loud*!

Mrs. D. was at an adjacent check- it counter, methodically making it a check to the Franklin Food art, a weekly custom this is, per- aps it might better be called a ood-sacrifice, this week's check r—how can it be? $328.98 for an ıexceptional week's shopping? for family of four? no supplies for a nner party? no beer, wine, liquor? ›t even any seafood? making out ıe check with resigned fingers ıen she heard the strange laughter ing around her, rising, erupting, ildlike raucous laughter, and turn- g, smiling, wanting to join in, rs. D. saw the cause—a bag of gro- ries had overturned, things were lling on the floor, and that look ı that poor man's face, it *was* ıusing, but Mrs. D. suppressed ughter for, oh dear, really it *wasn't* ıusing, not at all, that poor man cking off and staring at the pro- ıce on the floor, paralyzed as eryone laughed so cruelly, what e people thinking of? how can it be? in the Franklin Food Mart of all places?

Are the Delahunts neighbors of rs? Not exactly.

We don't have "neighbors," in e old sense of that word, in anklin Village. Our houses are nstructed on three- and four-acre :s, which means considerable dis- ıce between houses, and with our ıborate landscaping (trees of all rieties, shrubs, twelve-foot red- ›od fences, electrically charged re-mesh "deer-deterrent" fences) ; possible for the residents of one use to be unable to glimpse even e facade of the house next door, certainly it's possible to go for years without glimpsing the faces of the people who live next door, unless, of course, and this is frequently the case, we encounter one another socially—on neutral territory, you might say. Nor have we sidewalks in residential Franklin Village. Nor have we streets, in the old sense of that word—we have "lanes," we have "drives," we have "passes," "circles," "courts," even "ways," but we do not have "streets."

Are Mr. and Mrs. Delahunt friends of ours? Not exactly.

We don't have "friends," in the old sense of that word, in Franklin Village. Most of us are relatively new here, and a number of us are scheduled to move soon. Spring is the busiest time for moving! (Of course there are residents in this area who are known as "old-time." Who can recall, for instance, when the Franklin Hills Shopping Mall was nothing but an immense tract of open, wild, useless land, and when Main Street in the Village was residential from Pearl Street onward, and when Route 26 was a mere country highway!) Thus the majority of us make no claims to have (or to be) "friends"—but we *are* "friendly acquaintances" of one another and we *are* social. Very!

The Delahunts, Mr. and Mrs., became friendly acquaintances of ours within days of their arrival. They are highly respected, warmly regarded, attractive, energetic, invited almost immediately to join the Franklin Hills Golf Club and the yet more prestigious Franklin Hills Tennis Club. Mr. D. moved his family here three years ago from Greenwich, Connecticut—or was it Grosse Pointe, Michigan?—when he became sales director at W.W.C. & M., and Mrs. D. has recently begun public relations work part-time, for our Republican Congressman Gordon Frayne—Gordon's the man whom the papers so frequently chide, urging him to "upscale" his image. The Delahunts live in a six-bedroom French Normandy house on Fairway Circle, their fourteen-year-old daughter, Tracey, and their eleven-year-old son, Jamey, both attend Franklin Hills Day School. Mrs. D., like many of us, tries to participate in parent-teacher activities at the school, but—when on earth is there *time*?

"Upscaling" Gordon Frayne's image is a challenge, Mrs. D. laughingly, if somewhat worriedly, confesses. But Gordy Frayne—some folks even call him Gordo—wins elections. He's a big-hearted ruddy-faced shooting-from-the-hip character, often in the headlines and on television, one or another controversy, last year he was interviewed on network television and made a statement warning that "ethnic minorities" had better man their own oars "or the venerable Ship of State's gonna capsize and sink"—which naturally led to protests from certain quarters but a good deal of support from other quarters. Mrs. D., like other associates and friendly acquaintances of Gordon Frayne's, has learned to frown as she smiles at his witticisms, just slightly reprovingly, as Franklin Village women often do, she has unconsciously mastered this response, this facial expression, as adroitly as any professional actress—"Oh Gordy! Oh *really*!" It was at a party on Saturday night (the Saturday following the Thursday) that Gordy launched into one of his comical diatribes, the guy could have been a stand-up comedian for sure, cruel but ingenious mimicry of Jesse Jackson (an old routine, but a favorite), and the latest of his AIDS jokes...and most, though not all, of the company laughed, Mrs. D. among them, shocked, yes, but not wanting to be a prude, or to seem a prude; but smiling, shaking her head, avoiding the others' eyes as in a communal complicity, but thinking why, why, why, and what will come of this?

Five girls from the Franklin Hills Day School jogging on Park Ridge Road, Monday after school, pumping legs and arms, high-held heads, shorts and loose-fitting school T-shirts and identical expensive jogging shoes, and according to the girls' testimonies after the "vehicular assault" they were running single file, they were keeping to the left



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side of the road, facing oncoming traffic, careful to keep off the road itself and to run on the asphalt-paved shoulder. As usual one of the girls was falling behind, there were three girls running close together, then, a few yards behind them, the fourth, and approximately twenty feet behind her the fifth, poor Bonnie, Bonnie S., fourteen years old, second year in the "upper form" at the Day School. Bonnie S. is a few pounds overweight, not fat, the most accurate word would be plump but who wants to be plump? who can bear to be plump? fourteen years old and plump in Franklin Village, New York?—poor Bonnie S., whom the other girls like well enough, feel sort of sorry for, she's sweet she tries so hard she's so generous but it's pathetic, Bonnie trying to keep up with the tall thin girls, the girls she envies, letting it be known at school that her problem isn't overeating it's glandular it's "genetic—like fate," and maybe that's true since none of Bonnie's classmates ever sees her eating anything other than apples, carrot sticks, narrow slices of honeydew melon, she'll devour fleshy-fruit and rind both—poor Bonnie S.! (But *is* her weight problem "glandular"? Maybe she binges?—in secret?—tries to stick her finger down her throat and vomit it up?—but can't quite *succeed?*—enough to make a difference?) In any case, there was Bonnie S. running fifth in the line of girls, breathless, clumsy, a sweaty sheen to her round flushed face, a glazed look to her damp brown eyes, and the carload of boys swerved around the curve, that curve just beyond Grouse Hill Lane, six older students from the Day School jammed together in a newly purchased white Acura. The girls could hear the radio blasting heavy-metal rock even before the car came into sight, they could hear the boys yelling and laughing as the car bore down upon them, they saw the faces of the boys in the front seat clearly, wide grins, gleeful-malicious eyes, a raised beer can or two, then the girls were screaming, scattering. It was Bonnie S. who was the target, poor Bonnie arousing male derision pumping away there twenty feet behind the others, poor plum sweaty Bonnie S. with her expre sion of incredulous shock and terr as the white car aimed for her, bo ish-prankish braying laughter, sh threw herself desperately to the le the car skidded by, missing th screaming girl by perhaps a sing inch, then righted itself, regaine the road, on shrieking tires it spe away and there was Bonnie S., lyi insensible in the shallow concre drainage ditch like somethi tossed down, bleeding so profuse from a gash in her forehead that th first of her friends to reach h nearly fainted.

Tracey Delahunt tells her moth afterward, she'll confess to h mother solely, knowing her moth will understand, or, failing to unde stand—for who after all *can* unde stand?—will sympathize with th hungry wish to understand. "It ha pened so fast—oh God!—we looke back and there was Bonnie sort *flying* off the road like something i a kid's cartoon—and it was horr ble—it was just, just horribl but—" lowering her teary eye thick-lashed tawny-green eyes Mr D. thinks are far more beautif than her own, though closely resem bling her own, "—sort of, in way—oh God!—*comical* too."

Pressing her fingertips har against her lips but unable to kee from bursting into a pe of hysterical laughter.

Three days later, the most upse ting incident of all.

Not that Mrs. D. allowed herse to think of it very much afterwar Certainly not obsessively. She isn that type of mother—the obsessive neurotic mother. Fantasizing abou her children, worrying, suspicious.

She'd entered the house from th rear, as usual. About to step int the kitchen when she'd overhear coming up from the basement, th "family room" in the basement, th sound of juvenile laughter, boy laughter, and ordinarily she woul not have paused for a moment sinc Jamey and his friends often too over that room after school t watch videos, yes some of th videos the boys watched were que

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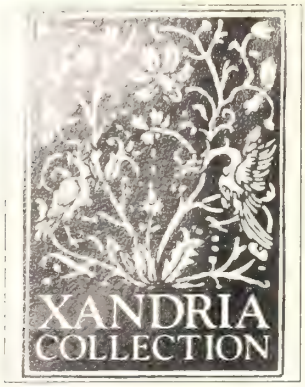
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tionable, yes Mrs. D. knew and, yes, she'd tried to exercise some restraint while at the same time she'd tried not to be, nor even to appear to be, censorious and interfering, but that day there was something chilling about the tone of the boys' laughter, and wasn't there, beneath it, another sound?—as of a creature *bleating?*—a queer high-pitched sound that worried Mrs. D. so she went to the door of the family room (which was shut) and pressed her ear against it, hearing the laughter, the giggling, more distinctly, and the other sound too, and carefully, almost timidly—she, Christine Delahunt, nearly forty years old, wife, mother, self-respecting surely?—self-determined surely?—opening a door timidly in her own house?—and saw there a sight that froze her in her tracks even as, in that instant, she was already shoving it from her, banishing it from her consciousness, denying its power to qualify her love for her son: for there were Jamey and several of his boy friends, eighth-graders at the Day School whose faces Mrs. D. knew well, Evan, Allen, Terry, red-haired impish Terry, and who was there with them? a girl? a stranger? and *strange?*—slightly older than the boys, with dull coarse features, eyes puckered at the corners, wet-dribbly mouth, no one Mrs. D. knew or had ever glimpsed before, and this girl was sprawled on her back on the braided "colonial"-style carpet in front of the fireplace, in the Delahunts' family room, her plump knees raised, and spread, naked from the waist down, and what was red-haired Terry doing?—poking something (too large to be a pencil, an object plastic and chunky, was it a child's play baseball bat?), or trying to poke something, into the girl's vagina?—while the other boys, as if transfixed, crouched in a circle, staring, blinking, grinning, giggling.

Mrs. D. cried, without thinking, "Oh what are you doing! Boys! Jamey! And you—you filthy, disgusting *girl!*"

Her voice was unlike any voice she'd ever heard springing from her. Breathless, disbelieving, angry, wounded.

She slammed the door up[on] the children's startled-guilt[y] grinning faces and fl[ed] Upstairs.

That evening, at dinner, not[a] word! not a word! not a word! [to] Jamey, who, frightened, subdued, [ate] his food almost shyly, and cast loo[ks] of appeal to Mrs. D., who behav[ed] as—as usual?—knowi[ng] that the child *knew.*

"I'm so afraid."

Mrs. D. was sitting, yes in th[e] family room, which Mr. D. preferr[ed] to call the "recreation" room, with [a] drink in her hand. Her voice w[as] quiet, apologetic.

Mr. D. sipped his drink. Peered [at] the newspaper. Said, vague, bu[t] polite, "Yes?"

"Harry. I'm so afraid."

"Well, all right."

Mr. D. was scanning the pape[r] with increasing impatience.

"Christ, it's always the same AIDS, crack, crime! 'Ghetto!'" H[e] squinted at a photograph of several black youths being herded into [a] police van, he laughed harshly. "*I'm* a subscriber, for Christ's sake, d'yo[u] think these punks subscribe? Wh[at] the hell am I always reading abou[t] *them?*"

Upstairs a telephone rang Tracey's private number.

Mrs. D. raised her glass to her lip[s] but did not sip from it. She feare[d] the taste of it—that first slip-slidin[g] taste. She pressed her fingertips t[o] her eyes and sat very still.

After a few minutes Mr. D inquired, glancing in her direction even as his attention remained on the newspaper, "Chris—are you all right?"

"I'm so afraid."

"Cramps, eh? Migraine?"

"I'm *afraid.*"

Mr. D. was scanning the editorial page. A sudden smile illuminated his face. He nodded, then, suddenly bored, let the newspaper fall. "Everyone has an *opinion*. 'Put your money where your mouth is' my father used to say."

Mr. D. rose—majestically. A solid figure, ham-thighed, with a faintly

ushed face, quick eyes. At its edges
Ir. D.'s face appeared to have erod
l but his mouth was still that
culpted" mouth which Mrs. D., a
ry long time ago, so long ago now
to seem laughable, like a scene in
low-budget science-fiction film,
ıd once avidly, ravenously, *insa-*
ibly kissed.

Mr. D. said, walking away, "Two
afferin. That'll do it."

After dinner, rinsing dishes and
tting them carefully into the
shwasher, Mrs. D. smiled tenta-
vely at her reflection in the win-
w above the sink. Why was she
raid? Wasn't she being a bit silly?
There, so often recently, she was
inking of what she was *not* think-
g of, now, abruptly, she was *not*
inking of what she was *not* think-
g of.

Elsewhere in the house, issuing
om the family room, and from
acey's room upstairs, laughter rip-
ed, peaked—television laughter by
e sound of it.

Simple boredom with the subject,
maybe.

Which subject?

Mr. H., father of one of the
rls who had been jogging on Park
dge Road on the day of the infa-
ous "vehicular assault," tele-
ıoned Mr. D. another time, and,
ıother time, Mr. D. took the call
private, the door to his study
mly shut; and, as they were
ıdressing for bed that night, when
rs. D. asked cautiously what had
en decided, Mr. D. replied affably,
We don't get involved."

Mrs. D. had understood from the
ry first, even as Tracey was sob-
ng in her arms, that, given the
igious character of Franklin Hills,
is would be the wisest, as it was
e most practical, course of action;
e gathered too, as things devel-
ed, despite Tracey's protestations
d bouts of tears, temper, and hys-
ria, that Tracey concurred, as her
l friends, apart from Bonnie, con-
rred, perhaps even before their
rried parents advised them, yet
e heard herself saying weakly, "Oh
arry—if Tracey *saw* those boys'
es, Tracey wants to *say*," and Mr.
, yawning, stretching, on his way

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Should the U.S. Play a Role in this Humanitarian Enterprise?

Only a few months ago the world was [illegible] spectacle of the airlift of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. But the rescue of the Ethiopians, heartening and important though it is, is really only a "sideshow" in the ongoing saga of this ingathering. The greatest challenge facing the Jewish state today, almost even more daunting than the implacable hostility surrounding Israel and the ever-present military challenge, is the ingathering of the Soviet Jews.

What are the facts?

■ For years it had been one of the [illegible] policy objectives of the United States vis-a-vis the Soviet Union to allow the free emigration of its citizens. Of all the nationalities in the Soviet Union, the Jews are by far the most endangered and the most anxious to leave the country. Finally, the gates have begun to open – a little slowly at first, but then wider and wider. Under U.S. immigration laws, only a small number of these Soviet fugitives are able to come to our country. The vast majority plan on settling in Israel. And that is as it should be. Because the state of Israel has one single purpose: the ingathering of Jews, especially those that are persecuted and who are in need, from all corners of the world. And it doesn't make any difference, of course, whether they are "Europeans" or whether they come from the Arab countries, from Asia or, as now in the case of the Ethiopian Jews, whether they are black Africans.

■ So far, about 300,000 Soviet Jews have arrived in Israel. A total of about 1 million are expected within the next three years. Since the population of Israel is about 5 million, that is equivalent to the United States having to absorb about 45 million new immigrants – more than the population of the states of California and New York combined – and that within a 3-year period! And the United States is a rich country and an immensely large one. Israel is a poor country. Its per capita income is less than $10,000 per year and more than one-half of the country's budget is dedicated to defense. And it's small: the size of the country is one-half that of San Bernardino County in California. The Soviet immigrants come virtually penniless, because they may not take more than $100 out of the country. There are no ready jobs, and the [illegible] housing. It is a daunting and almost overwhelming task to absorb these people. It is estimated that it will ultimately cost more than $9 billion.

■ But Israel is determined to overcome this challenge, to build the 260,000 new housing units that will be needed, to build the 12,000 new classrooms, to create the 300,000 new jobs, and to integrate the 1 million Soviet Jews into Israeli life, just as it has done with over 1 million previous immigrants. Israel and world Jewry will carry virtually all of the cost of this absorption and will create the massive additional infrastructure needed to sustain a population increase of over 20% in just two or three short years. In this fiscal year alone, more than $6 billion or 20% of Israel's budget will go toward absorption of immigrants. The American Jewish community will have raised more than $4 billion and has agreed to co-sign a further $900 million guarantee to help with these costs.

■ There is one urgent matter, however, in which the assistance of the United States will be needed. Israel will ask the United States to *guarantee* (not to grant, not even to lend) $10 billion for housing, funds that will be needed, in $2 billion yearly installments, over a 5-year period. This is a financial transaction that is virtually without risk and at virtually no cost to the United States. In contrast to many of the developing countries, Israel has never defaulted on a loan and has never asked for "forgiveness" of any indebtedness. It has a perfect payment record. American guarantees of this $10 billion loan are absolutely required in order to make the orderly absorption of Soviet Jews into Israel possible.

The matter of the loan guarantees will be before Congress almost immediately. The United States, a country of immigrants just like Israel, has tremendous moral responsibility in this matter. As with all other financial assistance to Israel, the funds under this guarantee will be used only within Israel's 1967 borders. No funds will be used to settle Jews in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). But the United States must focus on the humanitarian nature of this enterprise. It must not be "linked" and must not be conditioned upon any political issues, such as the procedural questions of the peace process, the question of settlements in the administered areas, or any other "concessions". Israel, like the United States, is a beacon of liberty and of hope. The United States should approve the $10 billion loan guarantee to Israel – its best friend and staunchest ally in the world – and should assist, virtually without risk and expense to itself, in one of the greatest liberation movements of our times: the exodus of 1 million Soviet Jews and their orderly absorption in Israel.

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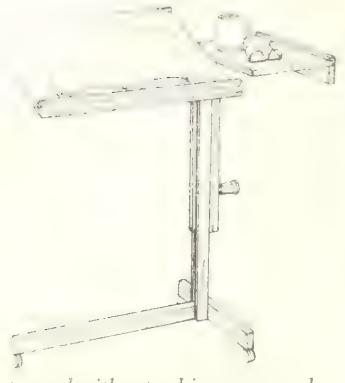
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into his bathroom, nodded vaguely in her direction and said, "Set the alarm for 6:15, hon, will you?—the limo's picking me up at 6:45."

Tracey no longer discusses the incident with Mr. and Mrs. D. *Ugly!—horrible!—nightmare!—never never forget!*—she restricts all discussions of it to her girl friends, as they restrict their discussions of it too.

That is, the girls who were witnesses to the incident, not Bonnie S., to whom it happened. Not pathetic Bonnie S., to whom they no longer speak, much, at all.

For weeks, red-haired Terry was banished from the Delahunts' house. Not that Mrs. D. spoke of such a banishment, or even suggested it to Jamey, who watched her cautiously, one might say shrewdly, his gaze shifting from her if she chanced to look at him.

No need to chastise and embarrass the poor child, Mrs. D. has begun to think. He's a good decent sensitive civilized child, he *knows* how much he has upset me.

Poor Mrs. K.!—poor "Vivvie"!

Since the start of her problem eighteen months ago, the first mastectomy, and the second mastectomy, and then the chemotherapy treatments, her circle of friendly acquaintances has shrunken; and those who visit her, primarily women, have had difficulties.

Yes it's so sad it's *so* sad.

Vivvie Kern of all women.

A few of us visited her at the hospital, some of us waited to visit her at home, it's awkward not knowing what to do or to say, it sometimes seems there isn't anything *to* do or to say, and there's the extra burden of having to exchange greetings with Mr. K., who appears almost resentful, reproachful, that's how men are sometimes in such cases, husbands of ex-prom-queen-type women, and Mrs. K. was, a bit boastfully, one of these. Of course it's wisest to avoid *the subject*, but how can you avoid *the subject* with that poor man staring at you ur smiling?—just *staring?*

But it's lovely in their new solar um, at least. So much to look a outside and in, and you aren't force to look at *her*, I mean exclusively *her*, poor thing! chattering away s bravely!—and that gorgeous red blond hair she'd been so vain abou mostly fallen out now, the wig ju sort of *perches* there on her head and her eyebrows are drawn on s crudely, and with her eyelashes gon it's *naked eyes* you have to look at you can't avoid it, but in such clos quarters and with the woman lean ing toward you sometimes even grip ping your arm as if for dear life ho can you avoid it?—except by no visiting poor Mrs. K. at all?

(Of course, some in our circl have stopped seeing her, and it embarrassing, how painful, Mrs. K joking to disguise her bitternes Saying, "My God, it isn't as if I hav AIDS after all, this isn't *contagiou* you know!")

Visiting Mrs. K. in late June, hav ing procrastinated for weeks, Mrs. D was nervously admiring the nume ous hanging plants in the solarium listening to Mrs. K. speaking anima edly of mutual acquaintances, com plaining good-naturedly of th Hispanic cleaning woman she an Mrs. D. shared, perhaps half-listenin was more accurate, not thinking what she was not thinking but sh *was* thinking of the ceremonies grief, death, mourning, how brave human beings yet how futile, ho futile yet how brave, for here was terminally ill woman now speakin aggressively of regaining her lo weight—"muscle tone" she calle it—and returning to the Tenn Club, and Mrs. D. smiled at th woman's wide smiling mouth, a thi mouth now and the lips garish crimson, yes but you must keep u the pretense, yes but you must b brave, and smile, and nod, and agre for isn't it too terrible otherwise?

Sharp-eyed, Mrs. K. has notice that Mrs. D. has another tim glanced surreptitiously at her wris watch, as a starving animal ca sense the presence of food, howev inaccessible, or even abstract, s does Mrs. K. sense her visitor

arning to escape, thus she leans
ruptly forward across the glass-
pped table, nearly upsetting both
eir glasses of white wine, she
ems about to bare her heart, *oh*
y does Vivvie do such things! with
h of us, as if for the first and only
e! seizing Mrs. D.'s hand in her
eletal but strong fingers and
eaking rapidly, intensely, naked
ght-druggy eyes fixed upon Mrs.
's, thus holding her captive.

"...*can't* bear to think of leaving
em...abandoning them...poor
ne! poor Robbie!...devastated...
moored...already Robbie's been
ving...only thirteen...the coun-
or he's been seeing...specializes
adolescent boys...says it's a par-
ularly sensitive age...trau-
atic...for a boy to lose...a mother."

Mrs. D., though giving the
pression of having been listening
osely, and being deeply moved,
s, in fact, not been listening to
rs. K.'s passionate outburst very
osely. She has been thinking of, no
e has *not* been thinking of. What?

With a startled, gentle little
ugh, Mrs. D. says, "Oh—do you
ally think so? *Really?*"

Frightened, Mrs. K. says, "Do I
ally think—what?"

Calmly and unflinching, Mrs. D.
oks the doomed woman in the
ce for the first time.

"That your husband and son will
'devastated' when you die? That
ey will even miss you, much? I
ean, after the initial shock—the
set to their routines?"

A long moment.

A *very* long moment.

Mrs. K. is staring incredulously at
rs. D. Slowly, her fingers relax
eir death-grip on Mrs. D.'s fingers.
er bright lips move, tremble—but
sound emerges.

It's as if, in this instant, the oxy-
n in the solarium is being sucked
it. There's a sense of something,
invisible flame, a radiance, about
go *out*.

"Oh, my goodness!" Mrs. D.
claims, rising. "I must leave, I still
have shopping to do, it's
after *six*."

He would tell us, confide in us,
s we'd had similar experiences

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R	P	O	W	D	E	R	P	U	F	F	E
O	R	A	L	E	A	E	U	N	F	E	D
L	O	M	B	A	R	D	I	C	Y	R	E
I	N	Y	U	T	A	I	R	T	I	M	E
C	O	N	F	E	T	T	I	I	T	E	M
L	U	F	F	D	R	O	O	L	I	N	G
I	N	L	A	Y	E	R	O	I	S	T	A
T	C	A	L	A	M	P	O	O	N	E	D
T	E	N	O	R	B	A	O	B	A	R	F
L	S	T	E	E	L	W	O	R	K	S	L
E	N	I	S	L	E	L	O	V	E	L	Y

NOTES FOR "PARTING WORDS"

Verbs: a. F(ILL)IN; b. (b)LUFF; c. D(RO, reversal)OLING; d. LA M(P...)OONED; e. BARF(ly) & Lit; f. ENISLE, hidden; g. FRO-LI-C; h. I-D(E...ATED; i. RE-DEEM; j. P(RON-OUNCE)S; k. BUFF-ALOES; l. S-NAKE(d). Nouns: a. CO-PIER; b. EMIT-(t)RIA(l) reversed; c. CONFETTI, anagram; d. ITEM, hidden; e. INLAYER, anagram; f. STEELWORKS, anagram; g. C-REDITOR (anagram); h. PUNCTILIO, anagram; i. FERMENTERS, "fur mentors"; j. I-O-O-O-O-O-O-O; k. GA(D)FL(anagram)-...Y; l. PAW-L. Adjectives: a. POW(D...)ER-PUFF; b. m(ORAL)e; c. U(nio)N-FED; d. L(O-M)BARDIC, anagram; e. TENOR(a), anagram; f. LO-(V...)ELY; g. LOAMY, hidden in reverse; h. NEAR, hidden; i. (j)IFFY; j. ATREMBLE, anagram; k. LIT-TLE (anagram); l. (chi)ANTI.

SOLUTION TO AUGUST DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 104). (EDWARD) EDELSON: WHO GOES THERE? If one assumes that there are millions of advanced civilizations in the galaxy and that the distances between them are not [illegible] few tens of light-years, there is an embarrassment of riches....More than thirty years ago...Fermi asked...bluntly, "Where are they?"

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 105, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by September 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the October issue. Winners of Double Acrostic No. 103 are David Humphries, New York, New York; Tom Hines, Basalt, Colorado; and Patricia Henry, Dekalb, Illinois.

lately, unsettling experiences, su
den laughter like sneezes, giggl
like carbonated bubbles breakir
the surface of something you
believed was firm, solid, permanen
unbreakable, the way in her car th
day, fleeing Mrs. K., Mrs. D. four
herself driving like a drunke
woman, dizzy-drunk, scary-drun
but also *happy*-drunk as she never
in real life, she was hearing laught
in the Mercedes, washing ticklir
over her, so funny! so wild! yo
should have seen that woman's fac
that bully! that bore! how dare sh
intimidating us! touching us! lik
that! how dare! as if I wasn't, f
once, telling the truth!

Hardly a five-minute drive fro
the Kerns' house on Juniper Way
the Delahunts' house on Fairwa
Circle, but Mrs. D. switched on th
radio to keep her company.

There.

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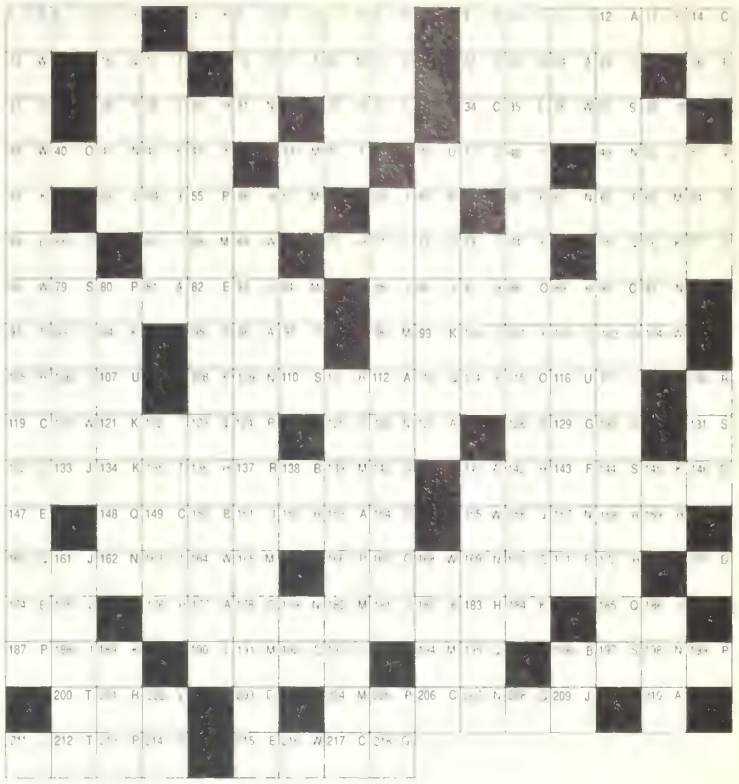
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 105

by Thomas Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: The first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 80.



CLUES

WORDS

A. Show extreme ingratitude (3 wds. followed by WORD F)
141 212 81 153 12 19
24 96 112 177 127

B. Ger. pharmacologist in the U. S. (1873-1961), Nobel Prize for medicine, 1936
42 138 180 196 182

C. Upset; destruction, ruin
5 226 90 119 33 149
14 217 34

D. Most given to small talk
192 47 203 173 128 64
146 21 95

E. Playfully coy
215 22 74 1 82 65 26 147
174

F. See WORD A (3 wds.)
62 54 25 114 17 97 48 38
143 43 171 73

G. Am. author (*Freedom Road*, *The Hessian*; full name)
193 72 218 129 170 23 9 125
140 102

H. Heroine of Hardy's *Return of the Native* (full name)
142 13 59 136 70 87 32 30
183 172 159

I. Together; in cooperation (3 wds.)
2 100 86 117 122 106 188 11
67 211

J. "The grim iron-bound serving-man" (hyph.; Donne, "The Perfume")
133 55 66 161 181 186 50 93
151 156 58 209 29

K. Submission of legislative measures to popular vote
52 184 121 99 94 189 4 145
76 134

L. Sturdy medium-sized fawn or brindle dog related to the bulldog
71 35 132 10 190

M. 1938 Anne Morrow Lindbergh book (3 wds.)
204 191 165 194 57 139 44 63
68 98 20 180 84

N. Fit times, good chances
61 41 49 157 198 169 109 126
207 31 162 179 91

O. "Down the Rabbit Hole" in *Alice in Wonderland* or "Loomings" in *Moby-Dick* (2 wds.)
178 103 77 40 214 115 154 88
208 167

P. Implements for Dickens's Madame Defarge (2 wds.)
199 80 176 28 187 205 60 108
213 55 7 166 101 3 124

Q. Indulge unrestrainedly; be very successful (3 wds.)
75 195 123 185 162 16 148 113

R. Saying, adage
105 118 152 201 111 137 158 89

S. Washbowls
37 110 6 79 18 197 56 144
151 27

T. Remove by cutting (2 wds.)
8 212 135 45 92 200

U. Straighten out
116 130 46 53 163 107

V. Fixed, mechanical method
202 51 53 175

W. Titular hero of an old Scottish ballad, he is put to death by a jealous king (2 wds.)
104 120 86 216 164 69 39 155
15 78 168

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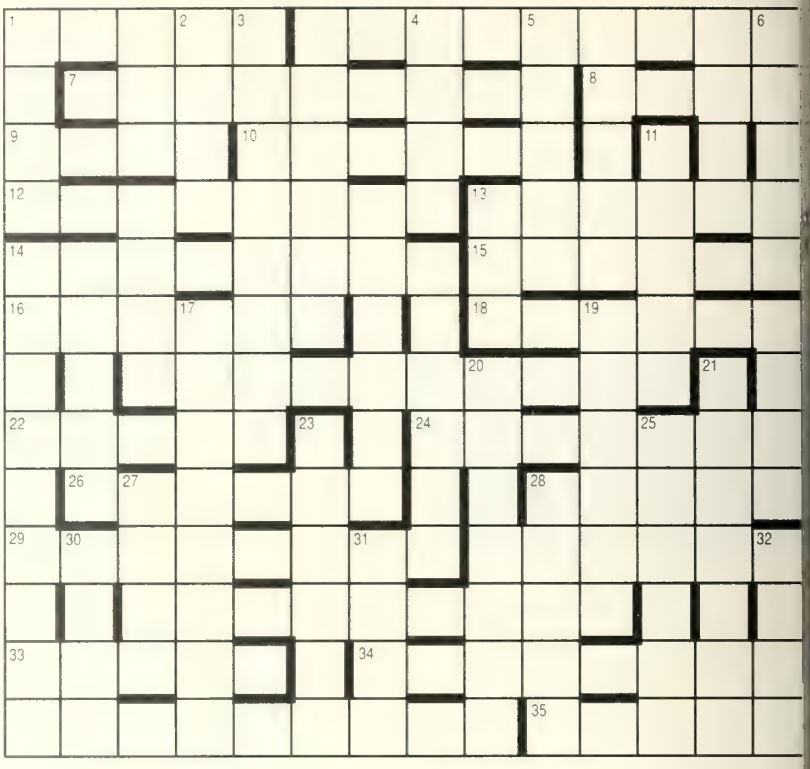
PUZZLE

Ciphers

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.

The five unclued Across entries, plus the title, could be said to provide the 12 unclued Down entries.

Clue answers include a place name, a nickname, and less than common words at 15 and 16. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 80.



Across

1. Timberwolves take a soft shot, getting upset as a consequence (5)
7. What happened when the prisoner was hit in the head? (9)
8. That Unitarian keeps back where a lot of Mormons are (4)
9. Part of allowance turned over for military problem (4)
10. Putting me in religious surroundings is simple (6)
12. We dye twice, possibly producing the wet look? (8, *hyph.*)
13. Polished the chimney pipe, not missing the center (6)
14. Is hardly able to speak—astrological reading includes Frenchwoman (8)
15. Holly and others recalled sex with energy after I left (6)
16. Came into money, making His Eminence mad (6)
18. Libertines getting resistance—they smooth over the dirt (6)
22. *What to Do in Aspen* manuscript is superficial (5)
24. Talk this way and that about right container for party (7, *two words*)
26. Upstanding members with pronounced manners (6)
[illegible]. Loud scrap with husband is out in view (5)
[illegible]. Most, like an idiot, lose it on fooling around (8)
33. Singer Roberts does two numbers in A flat, e.g. (5)
34. Engineer razes own areas where the fighting rages (8, *two words*)
35. Relieves the tension—flirts topless (5)

Down

2. Sole is bony, with head missing and little inside (4)
3. Cabal seems devious, taking in church and rabbi (8)
4. Was a guide heartlessly manipulated (4)
5. Romantic interlude could be dilly (5)
6. Chances sexual excitement after a bit of sleep (5)
11. Spelled "attention" without "ten" (5)
14. Initially spurns hash and numberless sausage, and sticks with meat and vegetables (9)
17. Contemplative aspect of decorum in antechamber (8)
19. I'm about to leave Mike Roberts in 14D (6)
20. Costermongers, in the U.S., become gentlemen, we hear (7)
21. Theatrical performance I meant to be recast with head of Equity (7)
23. Mary Jane's coat (6)
25. Toasts British battle with Poles (6)
27. Hamlet's not upset about wraith at first (4)
30. Trouble turned up with English entering old theatres (4)
31. Upcoming second baseman finally was cut (4)
32. In England, bed and board outdo Hilton's accommodations in their finishing touches (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Ciphers," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the November issue. Winners of the July puzzle, "Vegetable Garden," are Margo Sensenbrenner, Menlo Park, California; Kathy Roos, Northampton, Massachusetts; and Grant W. Erwin Jr., Seattle, Washington.

October

: Doing Yoko's Bidding

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HARPER'S



VICTIMS, ALL?
Recovery, Co-dependency, and the Art of Blaming Somebody Else
By David Rieff

UNELECTED, UNLAWFUL, UNCHECKED
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JOHN HOLTKAMP was spending more on gas than on film, which posed a problem for him.

John's a photographer. And he used to drive a truck. That big box he's leaning on is his bread and butter, and he takes it (and more) wherever the work happens to be. Which, on the average, means 750 miles from Monday morning to Friday night.

Hoping to pay less for those miles, John shopped the small imports. But they just wouldn't do. Then he heard about us. So he came by, with all his stuff, and looked at a Saturn sedan.

[illegible] portation. EPA-estimated MPG for the SL1 automatic is 29 city, 35 highway. John Holtkamp is pictured with a 1992 Saturn SL1.



(Our 60/40 split fold-down rear seatbacks, while a real mouthful to say, make it easy when you have more than a trunkful to haul.)

On the weekends, John hauls animal feed. Because the Holtkamps have a llama, eight miniature donkeys, and an emu.

Since we didn't know what an emu was either, we asked, before meeting, if he wouldn't mind holding his emu while we took a picture of him and his Saturn. "Well," John said, it's okay with me, but emus don't really like that sort of thing."

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OCTOBER 1991

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New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. In Canada, second-class postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario. Canadian GST #R124774167. POST
changes to *Harper's*, P. O. Box 7511, Red Oak, IA 51591-0511. ISSN0017-789X. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please provide both address from
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LETTERS

Accounting for the Banking Crisis

L. J. Davis is right, given the past two decades, to oppose further deregulation of U.S. banks ["The Problem With Banks? Bankers," June]. Where he is wrong, though, is in suggesting that individual incompetence rather than systemic market failure lies at the root of the financial industry's troubles. With a New Deal liberal's typical optimism, he pins the blame for our current financial debacle on bankers when what is truly nonsensical is the fundamental myth by which all bankers and bank depositors live. The myth is as follows: Hand a competent banker a small sum of greenbacks and the banker will place the cash in a mysterious black box. The money will grow exponentially over time, as if by magic. Leave the cash in the box indefinitely and it will accumulate exponentially, until a small initial savings has grown into a sizable fortune. We are not to worry about the *mechanism* in the box that causes this to happen, goes this thinking, or whether that mechanism may break down in the future and stop functioning. Instead, we are directed to turn our attention to the "character" of the banker and the "soundness" of the bank. If these two elements are solid, exponential growth of one's money will naturally follow.

This kind of thinking, quite common in children's fairy tales, unfortunately has no basis in nature. Nothing can grow exponentially for long in the natural world, because the mathematics of exponential growth is so magnificently relentless that it dooms whatever it touches, causing the humblest of fireflies to become figurative supernovas before they collapse and die. When populations of deer, lemmings, maggots, or rats grow exponentially, they're inevitably on a collision course with environmental constraints. Before too long, they crash. Quite similarly, the process of exponential capital accumulation in our economy always breaks down after a decade or so of growth, causing scores of business bankruptcies and untold human suffering every time. As Marx and Engels noted nearly 150 years ago in *The Communist Manifesto*, each major economic downturn in our society occurs because of a seeming absurdity—because of too much capital, too much production, too many goods and services on the market chasing too few consumers. Because there is "too much," however, those who have produced the surplus generally go hungry. And the recession continues until large amounts of "surplus" capital have been wasted, written off, or otherwise destroyed, which clears the field for new investments in new industries. Then the whole process of exponential capital growth can begin again.

Blaming American bankers for this cycle, as Davis seeks to do, is like faulting them for the weather.

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced; volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

The problem is capital accumulation and its limits, not the training or intelligence of bankers.

John Andrews
Washington

L. J. Davis's otherwise perceptive critique of the Bush administration's proposed banking reforms goes astray in its acceptance of the administration's argument for nationwide banking. Davis repeats the claim that the United States is "overbanked," banking jargon that simply means "too competitive." It's certainly true that the major banks would prefer to be part of a small, select club dividing up the market in each community. As with every other concentrated industry, however, consumers would pay a stiff price, in this case in the form of lower earnings on their deposits, higher interest rates on their loans, and less availability of funds for all but the most well-heeled customers and the most secure projects.

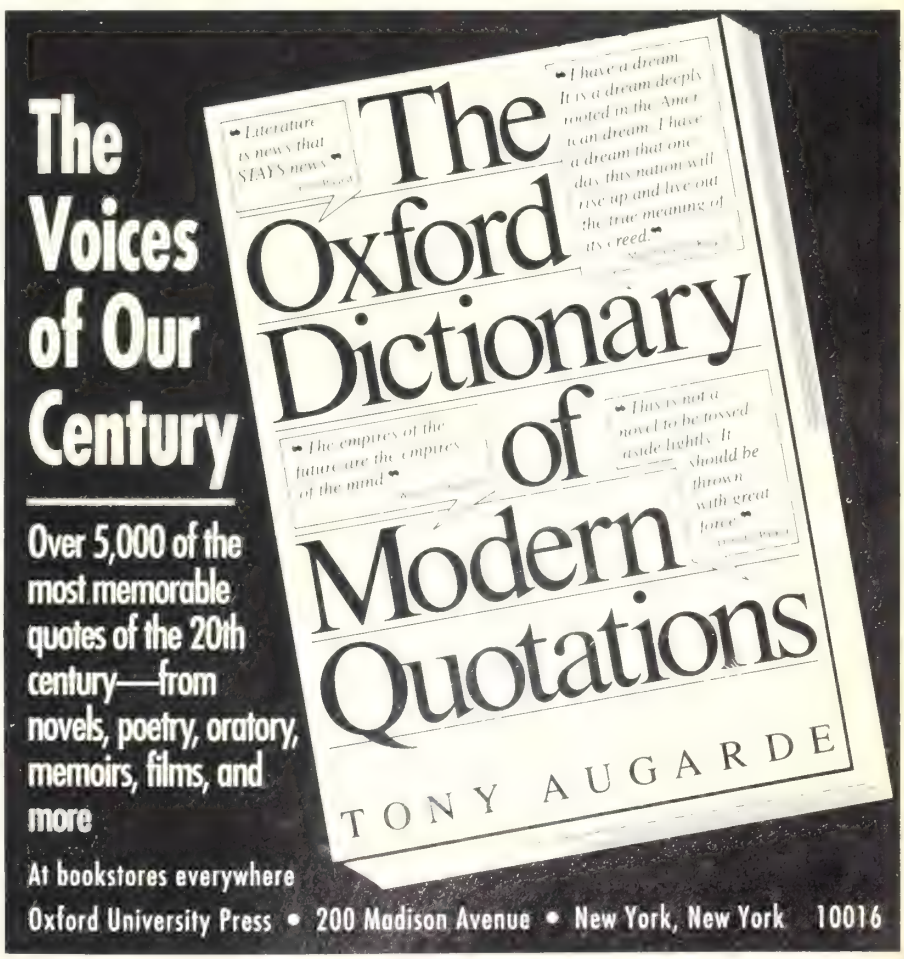
The rationale for nationwide banking offered by the Bush administration and the major banks is hardly persuasive. Their most frequently cited argument is that nationwide banking would enable banks to diversify their portfolios geographically and thus be less dependent on the economic fortunes of a particular region. However, banks already have a number of methods by which they can lend beyond the local regions in which they take deposits, including the establishment of loan-production offices and the use of secondary markets and correspondent banking relationships. As Davis's own discussion of the disastrous international lending experience of the major banks demonstrates, banks can already lend money anywhere in the world—a power that has done nothing to stabilize their performance.

A second argument on behalf of nationwide banking—that it would improve bank performance through increased efficiency—is not supported by research on the relationship between bank size and operating costs. Anyone who still finds these arguments compelling should review

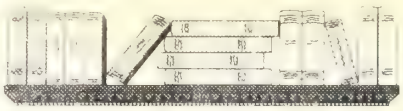
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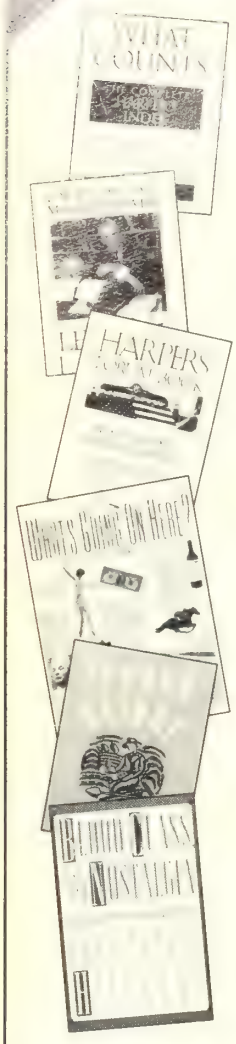
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recent data on bank earnings showing bank profitability and bank size to be inversely related.

Aside from questions of industry profitability, how would nationwide banking affect individual borrowers, businesses, and communities? The portrait Davis paints of the corporate culture within our major banks is by no means reassuring. If their response to laying their hands on billions in new deposits in the 1970s was to invest in multimillion-dollar development projects in the Third World and real estate megadeals in this country, one may rightly ask what they will do with billions more when they buy up local and regional banks in states like Mississippi, Iowa, and Montana. Will they continue to make loans to the thousands of small businesses and farms that drive the economies of these states? Or will they be more preoccupied with sinking their new resources into huge commercial and industrial projects in places like California, Korea, Spain, and Singapore, which may be more profitable than the family farm? I wouldn't bet on the former.

It would be wise for Davis and the public-at-large to be skeptical about proposed new geographic powers for major banks. The dispersion of financial resources and the choices it preserves for borrowers is one feature of America's financial system that has served us well since the nineteenth century and is undoubtedly one important reason for the dynamism of our economy. The nation deserves a more thorough discussion of the implications of nationwide banking before suffering the unintended consequences of yet another quick-fix banking reform.

Peter Kwass
Boston

L. J. Davis correctly associates the demise of "many smaller banks" with bad loans. But he wanders into a thicket of invalid reasoning when he attempts to tie the banking crisis to the arrival in Washington of "an amiable marionette named Ronald Reagan." The seeds of the banking crisis were sown long before Reagan

ecame president, with the heavi-
st – ahem – "fertilization" occur-
ing, incidentally, during the
residency of Jimmy Carter. It was
he Depository Institutions Dereg-
ation and Monetary Control Act of
980 that raised federally insured
eposit ceilings to the disastrous
evel of $100,000 and abolished
nterest ceilings on deposits. The
umper crop of bank failures that
llowed just happened to reach
eak production during the 1980s,
nd no president—Republican or
)emocrat, marionette or not
ould have prevented it, given the
Congress and the economic condi-
ions of the times.

But Davis is quite correct that
ankers are guilty. The Drexel dis-
ase had been spreading rapidly
mong bankers long before Ivan
oesky and Michael Milken helped
ive the virus its name. Bankers
gnored the infection and talked at
ength about "modern" banking
nnovations, higher yields, and a
ore aggressive lending strategy.
ad loans increased exponentially
ith the quotient of bankers' greed.
)ne can't help working around,
nally, to the greed element when
nalyzing what went wrong in the
anking community—it shows up in
many forms, in so many places.
)avis says a banker "must be pru-
ent," but prudence was not in the
ocabulary of the worst offenders.
ew of these folks have gone to jail;
ost of them are still employed in
he financial community. That's
hy Davis is on target with his con-
lusion that any new banking regu-
ations should not allow these
eople to operate the way they have
n the past. And we should resist
ny future efforts by the government
o rebuild or clean up the nest the
ankers messed up themselves.

)onald G. Mashburn
)klahoma City

The mentality of bankers, as
lescribed by L. J. Davis, is under-
cored by my own experience. My
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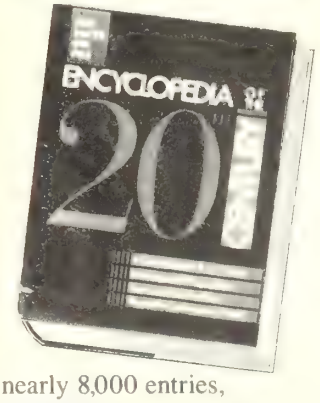
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50 percent home-equity loan on a fully paid property because I refused to buy flood insurance. Without the insurance, the bank informed me, my loan application was "out of compliance." Why did I refuse to buy the insurance? Because the county told me that although twelve hurricanes have come through the area where I live since record-keeping began in 1926, there have been no floods. *None*. Similarly, I do not have insurance against being kidnapped by Alpha Centaurans or being killed by an expressway overpass falling on my head.

One would think that would be that—prudent citizen is denied funds borrowed against the value of his house. But then the bank officer offered to make me an *unsecured* loan in the amount I had requested.

Edgar F. Coudal
Osprey, Fla.

A Black Counter-Reality

James Traub's report about the paranoid rhetoric of participants on *The Gary Byrd Show*, a New York City–based black radio talk show ["A Counter-Reality Grows in Harlem," July] delivered an eerie jolt of recognition. And, as we say here in California, I need to talk about it.

One of my duties as director of an association of artists and small-business people (most of whom, like me, are white) is to attend meetings with other community and civic organizations in our largely black neighborhood. Oftentimes I feel like Traub did sitting in New York City's Apollo Theatre as *The Gary Byrd Show* was being broadcast, watching "the counter-reality take shape."

It isn't surprising that people encountering the unremitting injustices, brutalities, and double crosses suffered by blacks acquire a kind of collective predilection to enter a Twilight Zone where it matters less how something actually happened, or that anything happened at all, than that what is purported to have happened could have happened. Facts matter less than plausibility, and even if it didn't happen this time, it or something very like it *has* happened, *can* happen, or probably *will* happen. And even when I consider the experiential gulf between whites and blacks, I wonder, "Well, why not? Does it really matter that Tawana Brawley was a fraud?"

The plausible truth of such fantasies, when entertained by the powerless, is more poignant than dangerous. The tragedy is the power of this demonizing process to divert attention from real problems, the estrangement of those who are less paranoid, and the ease with which opportunists can seize upon these incidents for self-interested purposes.

Scott Madison
San Francisco

As a lecturer in American history at the City College of New York in Harlem, I too have heard my share of the "counter-reality" described by James Traub. I've had students patiently tell me that the AIDS virus is manufactured at a top-secret pharmaceutical plant in Israel and that McDonald's salts the food it sells in its ghetto franchises with long-lasting sedatives.

Nevertheless, we must put these assertions in perspective. America's political tradition is full of cockamamie conspiracy theory and the ideology of paranoia. Take the McCarthy inquisitions, or the Anti-Masonic Party of the 1830s. Our country has known its share of unscrupulous political leaders willing to manipulate a frightened, frustrated and gullible voting public. Why are we surprised, then, when African-American politics exhibits the same pathologies European-American politics have displayed all along?

James Ciment
New York City

James Traub dramatically captured my own feelings of frustrated bafflement over the reflexive, Pavlovian conviction by some blacks of the existence of a universal racial conspiracy against all nonwhites. I have asked myself a thousand times what it must be like to live one's life first as a person of a certain color, second as a perpetual victim, and then, perhaps, third as a

uman being. To make every decision, to see every event and every xpression in one's waking life as an xtension of one's color must be omething like grimly putting on a traitjacket every morning. Life is ifficult enough, but to imagine that ach slight and misfortune and failre is not simply a matter of life eing basically unfair and is instead matter of pigment is incredibly elf-destructive. Is it any wonder hat blacks suffer such a high incience of hypertension and heart disase, that they kill and are killed ith such frightening frequency?

In an odd way, there's hope in the act that Melvin Green, a member f the radio show's audience, tries ard to hate whites and cannot. laybe he is in a process of learning o live without excuses. Maybe he an learn to live as a human being, esponsible for himself, who just appens to be black.

ohn C. Stevens
ort Worth, Tex.

canning the Numbers

The July Harper's Index reported hat supermarket price scanners vercharge on one out of two sale tems and cited a survey by the New ork City Department of Consumer ffairs as its source. However, the urvey showed that overcharges ccur on one in ten items. What is rue, and perhaps the source of conusion, is that the chances are one ut of two that a New York City upermarket has at least one scanner hat overcharges.

Despite the error, a 10 percent vercharge figure is still notable—nd unforgivably high. In fact, our itywide survey revealed that *over*harges are ten times more common han *under*charges. That's why our gency supports tough laws that nandate price-marking on all prodcts in the supermarket. Only with omplete price information in hand an consumers in the checkout line now whether they're being canned or merely scammed.

Mark Green
Commissioner
Department of Consumer Affairs
New York City

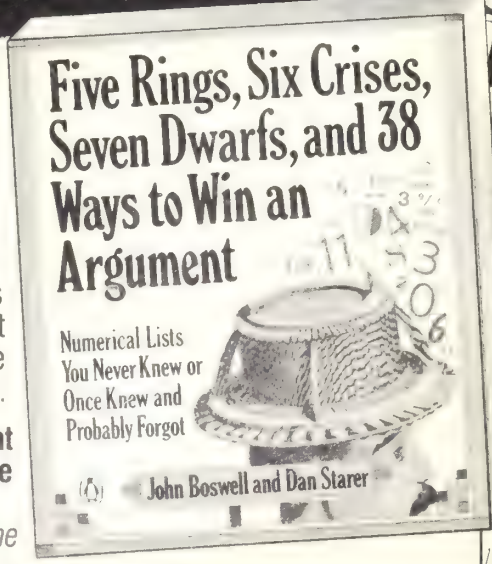
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NOTEBOOK

Sense and sensibility

By Lewis H. Lapham

The ocean is closed.

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On a Tuesday afternoon in late July, in a taxi stalled for an hour in traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge, I listened to a New York literary agent praise his daughter's gift for refined political sentiment. Twenty years ago a proud father might have praised a daughter's talent for music or gymnastics, but the times have changed, and it is the exquisiteness of the moral aesthetic that prompts the cue for applause. The girl was fifteen, a student at one of the city's better private schools, already word perfect in her catechism of correct opinions. Her father was a successful dealer in high-priced pulp, and his daughter kept up with the latest cultural trends as they made their way around the beaches and lawns of East Hampton.

At the beginning of the spring term her biology class had taken up the study of primitive organisms, and the girls were asked to look through microscopes at a gang of bacteria toiling in a drop of water. The agent's daughter refused. No, she said, she would not look. She would not invade the privacy of the bacteria. They might be weak and small and without important friends in Congress, but they were entitled to their rights, and she, for one, would grant them a measure of respect. After what apparently was a moment of stunned silence in the classroom, the teacher congratulated the girl for her principled dissent. Of course she didn't have to look at [illegible]. She had taught the [illegible] a lesson that couldn't be [illegible] microscope.

The story seemed to me proof of the inanity of much of what goes by the name of higher education, but the agent was so pleased with it, so suffused with the light of virtue, that I smiled politely and said something genial and optimistic about his daughter's chances of going to Harvard. By that time the taxi had crossed the bridge, and I was glad to escape into the less rarefied atmosphere of Second Avenue before the agent began to explain his theory of global harmony. I once had listened to him give a speech on the subject to a conference of publishers, and I knew that he was capable of long recitations in what he believed to be the language of the Oglala Sioux.

Two days later I was still thinking about the innocent and disenfranchised bacteria when I came across a news item on an inside page of the *New York Times* that matched the literary agent's story with its appropriate corollary. The narrative was very brief, no more than a few paragraphs, and sketchy in its details, but the moral lesson was as solemn as an auto-da-fé. Well after sunset on the evening of July 16, an eight-year-old boy in Tampa, Florida, looked through the window of a building near his home and saw a man and a woman (both unmarried and both in their middle thirties) making love in a hot tub. The hot tub was in the bathroom of a condominium that the man had rented three weeks earlier, and the blinds on the window had been drawn closed. The boy reported the event to his father, who called the sheriff's office. While awaiting the arrival of the men in uniform, a small crowd gathered outside the bathroom window, and another neighbor took it upon himself to record the scene in the hot tub on videotape. He was, he said, assembling evidence.

"They knew we were out there," he said. "They were exhibitionists. I shot right through the blinds."

Both the man and the woman were arrested on charges of committing a lewd and lascivious act. They spent the rest of the night in jail, and the next morning they each had to post $15,000 bail before being let loose in the streets.

The vigilant schoolboy in Florida reminded me of the sensitive schoolgirl in New York, and I wondered why it was that both prodigies seemed to partake of the same spirit. At first glance they seemed so unlike each other, and it was easy enough to contrast the differences of age, sex, education, and regional prejudice. Their acts of piety expressed contradictory notions of the public good, and I could imagine each of their fathers thinking that the other father had stumbled into the snares of the Antichrist. The boy quite clearly had been born under the star of the political right. Given world enough and time, he stood a good chance of growing up to vote Republican, enforce the drug laws, and distribute Bibles or the collected works of Allan Bloom. The girl had been raised under the sign of the political left, and once she completes the formality of the curriculum at Harvard, I expect that she will write funding guidelines for the federal government or scripts for Kevin Costner.

The ideological differences matter less than the common temperament or habit of mind. Both the boy and the girl apparently were the kind of people who sift the grains of human feeling and experience through the cloth of milk-white

bstraction, and I didn't doubt but
iat they never would have much
se for historical circumstance or
ie exception that proves the rule.

I wish I didn't think that such
eople now speak for the American
iajority, or that the will toward
onformity crowds so close to the
irface of so many nominally politi-
al disputes. The spirit of the age
ivors the moralist and the busy-
ody, and the instinct to censor and
ippress shows itself not only in the
rotests for and against abortion or
ulticulturalism but also in the pro-
ibitions against tobacco and pet
irds. It seems that everybody is for-
ver looking out for everybody else's
piritual or physical salvation.
Doomsday is at hand, and the com-
unity of the blessed (whether
efined as the New York Yacht Club
r the English department at Duke)
an be all too easily corrupted by
ie wrong diet, the wrong combina-
on of chemicals, the wrong word.
he preferred modes of address
umber only three—the sermon,
ie euphemism, and the threat—
nd whether I look to the political
eft or the political right I'm con-
antly being told to think the right
houghts and confess the right sins.

Passing through Portsmouth,
hode Island, I see a sign on a public
us that says DO DRUGS AND KISS
OUR FEDERAL BENEFITS GOOD-BYE. I
eaf through *The Dictionary of Cau-
onary Words and Phrases*, compiled
y a tribunal of purified journalists
the 1989 Multicultural Management
rogram Fellows), and I learn that I
iust be very, very careful when using
he words "man," "woman," "water-
nelon," "barracuda," "community,"
banana," and "impotent." Given a
areless inflection or an ambiguous
ontext, the words can be construed
s deadly insults.

The prompters of the public
larm sound their dismal horns from
o many points on the political
ompass that I suspect that what
hey wish to say isn't political. The
would-be saviors in our midst worry
bout the moral incoherence of a
ociety distracted by its fears—fear
f apples, fear of Mexicans, fear of
ankruptcy, fear of the rain—and
hey seek to construct the citadel of

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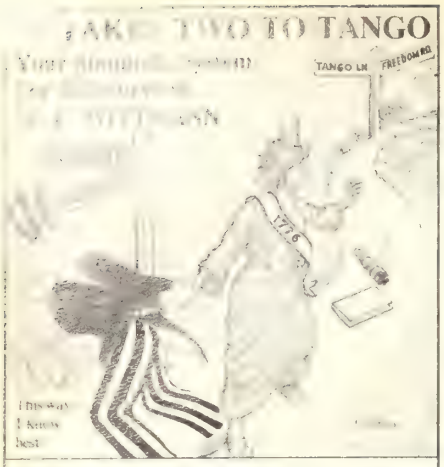
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the New Jerusalem with whatever materials come most easily or obviously to hand. Every few days the newspapers bear further witness to the jury-rigged orthodoxies meant to redeem the American moral enterprise and reclaim the American soul.

•The village of Chester, New York, passes a law to the effect that all the signs on all the stores of a new shopping mall must be painted blue. A merchant neglects to read the fine print on the lease and plans to put up the red sign under which he has been doing business for thirteen years. No good. Unacceptable. Either he paints the sign blue or he goes elsewhere. The village clerk, Elizabeth Kreher, overrules his objections with an air of sublime self-righteousness. "He shouldn't be complaining; he should be thankful to have such a nice place to move his store into. Plus it's a beautiful color—I just love blue."

•The chairman of General Public Utilities Corporation, a married man named Hoch, admits to a love affair with a woman employed by the company as vice president of communications. The news of their liaison arrived by anonymous letter. Hoch resigns, but the woman keeps her office and title. Various spokespersons explain that a public utility depends for its rate increases on the grace and favor of the federal government and therefore must align its manners with the prevailing political trends. The feminist lobby in Washington is as loud as it is judgmental. Good-bye, Hoch.

•A waiter and a waitress working in a restaurant south of Seattle refuse to serve a pregnant woman a rum daiquiri in order to lead her out of the paths of temptation. When the woman persists in her folly, the waiter and waitress (both in their early twenties and very devout in their beliefs about health and hygiene) lecture her on the evils of alcohol and read her the surgeon general's warning about drinking and birth defects.

•A woman in California kisses her boyfriend good-night on the steps of her own house, and a committee of disapproving neighbors reprimands her for lowering the tone and character of the block. For precisely the same reason, a committee of neighbors in Illinois censures a man for parking a vulgar pickup truck in his own driveway.

•Joseph Epstein, the editor of *The American Scholar* and a writer well-known both for his wit and neoclassical political views, publishes an essay in a literary journal in which he refers to "the snarling humorlessness" of various feminist critics and professors. He makes the mistake of repeating the joke about the couple in Manhattan who cannot decide whether to get a revolver or a pit bull in order to protect themselves against burglars. They compromise by hiring a feminist. The joke incites so much rage within some of the nation's more advanced universities that Epstein feels constrained to write a letter of explanation to the *New York Times* conceding that "one attempts humor at one's peril."

Like Queen Victoria and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Puritan spirit is not easily amused. Over the last seven or eight years I've noticed that my own experiments with irony or satire in mixed or unknown company require some introductory remark (comparable to a warning from the surgeon general) announcing the arrival of a joke that might prove harmful to somebody's self-esteem.

A society in which everybody distrusts everybody else classifies humor as a dangerous substance and entertains itself with cautionary tales. The news media magnify the fear of death by constantly reciting the alphabet of doom (abortion, AIDS, alcohol, asbestos, cancer, cigarettes, cocaine, etc.), and the public-service advertising extols the virtues of chastity and abstinence. The more urgent the causes of alarm, the more plausible the justifications for stricter controls. Stricter controls necessarily entail the devaluation of any and all systems of thought (most of them humanist) that make invidious distinctions

between man and beast, man and moth, man and blood specimen, and I've noticed that the puritanical enthusiasms of the last several years complement and sustain the attitude of mind that assigns to human beings a steadily lower and more disreputable place in the hierarchy of multicellular life forms.

The rules and exhortations run to so many cross-purposes (more freedom and more rights, but also more laws and more police; no to fornication, yes to free contraceptives in the schools; yes to the possession of automatic weapons, no to the possession of cocaine) that it's hard to know what sort of perfect society our saviors have in mind. Presumably it will be clean and orderly and safe, but who will be deemed worthy of inhabiting the spheres of blameless abstraction? Maybe only the bacteria. Human beings make too much of a mess with their emotions and their wars. They poison the rivers and litter the fields with Styrofoam cups, and very few of them can be trusted with kitchen matches or the works of Aristotle.

I see so many citizens armed with the bright shields of intolerance that I wonder how they would agree on anything other than a need to do something repressive and authoritarian. I have no way of guessing how they will cleanse the world of its impurities, but if I were in the business of advising newly minted college graduates, I would encourage them to think along the lines of a career in law enforcement. Not simply the familiar and sometimes unpleasant forms of law enforcement—not merely the club, the handcuffs, and the noose—but law enforcement broadly and grandly conceived, law enforcement as a philosophy and way of life, as the presiding spirit that defines not only the duty of the prison guard and police spy but also the work of the food inspector, the newspaper columnist, the federal regulator, and the museum director. The job opportunities seem to me as numberless as the microbes still at large (and presumably up to no good) in the depths of the cold and unruly sea. ■

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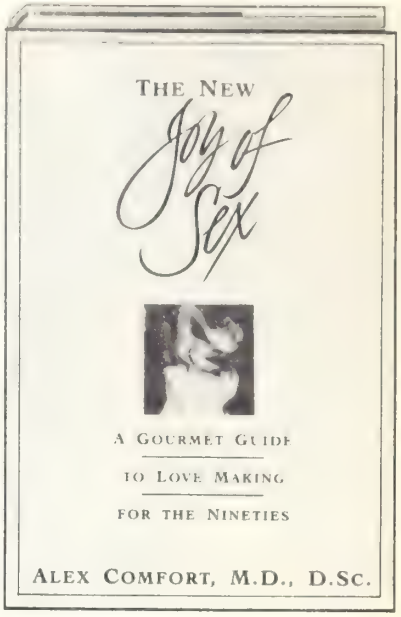
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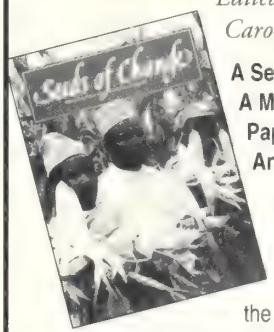
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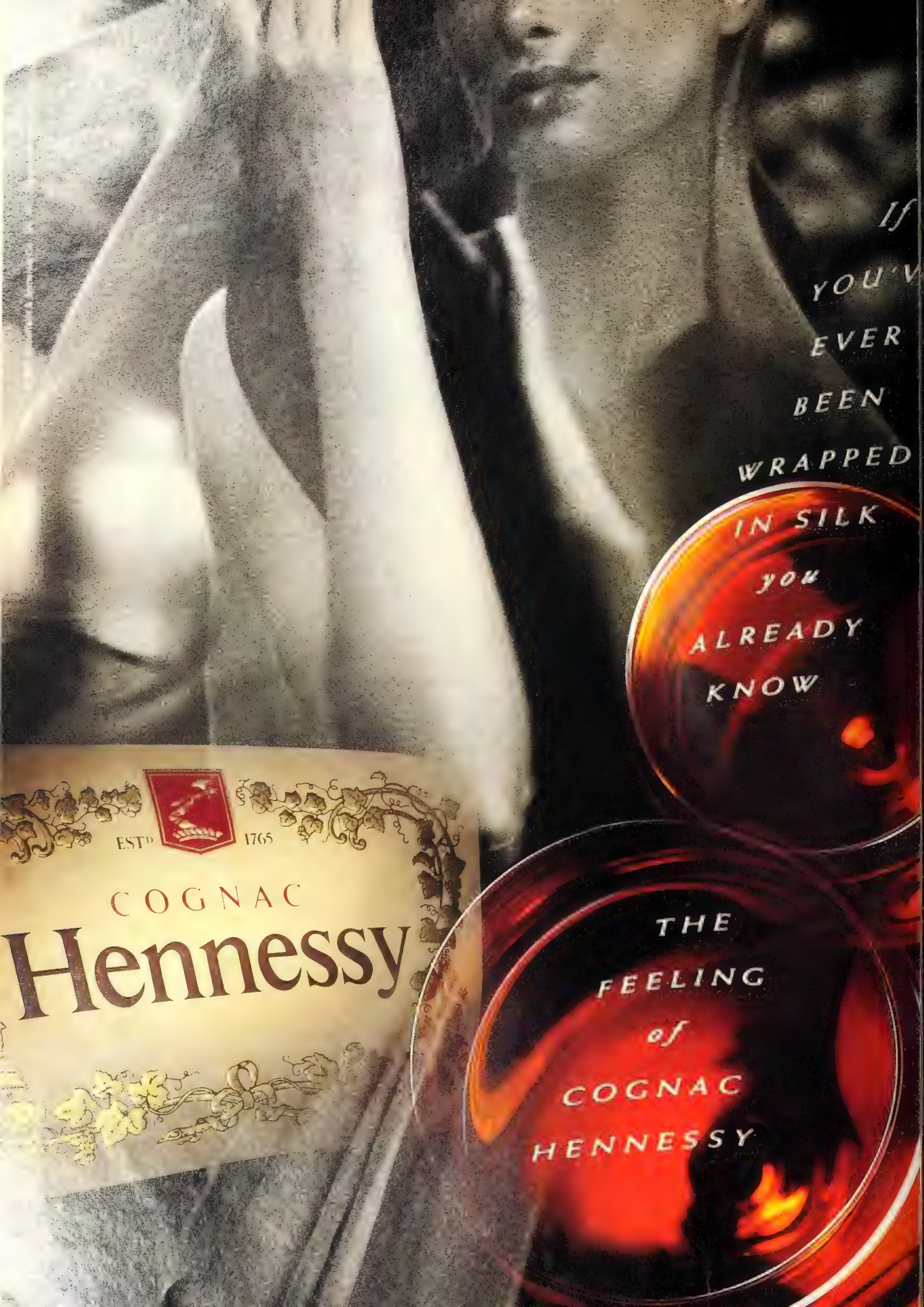
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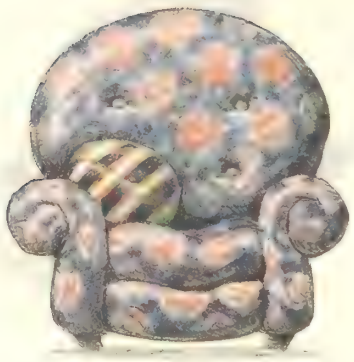
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Percentage change, since 1989, in Soviet arms sales to the Third World : -7
Percentage change, since 1989, in U.S. arms sales to the Third World : +131
Number of the last four U.S. recessions that were interrupted by a brief economic recovery : 3
Percentage change, since 1989, in the profits earned abroad by American-owned companies : +15
Percentage change, since 1989, in the profits earned in the United States by American-owned companies : -21
Percentage of cities in the Northeast that have raised property taxes in the past year : 85
Chances that an American believes that the country's domestic problems are "beyond solving" : 1 in 8
Percentage of Japanese who say that the Soviet Union is the greatest threat to their nation : 22
Percentage who say the United States is : 24
Percentage of Japanese who say they'd be willing to fight for their country : 10
Amount traders on the Philadelphia Stock Exchange can be fined for fighting, per punch : $1,000 [see page 18]
Cost of a one-hour lesson in "ring psychology" at Slammers Wrestling Gym in Sun Valley, California : $70
Number of trial lawyers who have taken acting lessons from Applied Theater Techniques in Los Angeles : 8,000
Percentage of blacks who say that race "should never be a factor" in choosing a justice of the Supreme Court : 60
Number of states that have passed laws to protect Little League coaches from civil lawsuits : 13
Number of hours Linda Judson of Cobb County, Georgia, spent in jail last May for failing to return a rented videotape : 2
Number of years that it would take to execute every American on death row, at a rate of one execution per day : 7
Number of Americans who have contracted the AIDS virus from a health-care worker : 5
Number of American health-care workers who have contracted the AIDS virus from a patient : 40
Number of different brands of condoms sold at Condomania, a Greenwich Village store : 209
Chances that a Thai man has been to a prostitute : 3 in 4
Percentage of university students in China who say they approve of premarital sex : 78
Percentage who say they have actually had any sexual experience : 11
Percentage of Canadians who say they have "never thought about" having sex with a co-worker : 60
Percentage of American men who say they have fantasized about having sex with a fictional TV character : 30
Portion of the fan mail received by actors on *The Young and the Restless* that is addressed to their character : 1/3
Percentage of the food advertising on Saturday-morning TV that is for junk food : 95
Ratio of the production cost of a Coca-Cola can to the production cost of the Coca-Cola it contains : 2:1
World's record for the longest period of time a Life Saver has been kept intact in a human mouth, in hours : 7
Number of tabs of LSD confiscated at a series of Grateful Dead concerts in Landover, Maryland, in March : 36,442
Amount Woodstock, New York, plans to earn by selling one-square-inch plots of the town for $10 apiece : $8,400,000
Cost of a two-square-foot "personal meadow" from Zezé Flowers in Manhattan : $75
Estimated number of pigeons killed in New York City each week by falcons : 150
Estimated number of moose hit by cars in Maine last year : 580
Maximum fine for parking illegally overnight in Tokyo : $1,400

Figures cited are the latest available as of August 1991. Sources are listed on page 82.
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READINGS

[Essay]

OF A CONSERVATIVE (CREATED) CASTE

From "The Shape of Things to Come," in the July 8 National Review. *The editors of the magazine asked five conservatives to "muse about what the future may hold"; below is Charles Murray's response. Murray, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of* Losing Ground: American Social Policy *and* In Pursuit: Of Happiness and Good Government. *His conversation with Jesse Jackson appeared in the April 1986 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

It makes sense to be a little schizophrenic about the American future. There is much that appears positive as one contemplates the future, but there is also a dark side looming.

The dark side flows from a prediction that in itself seems innocuous: As national wealth grows in the coming years, so will the proportion of people who are rich. Consider that at the end of the Korean War, using constant 1988 dollars, fewer than one family in 1,000 had an income of $100,000 or more. By 1989, one family per twenty-five had an income that great.

The numbers of the rich will tend to grow more rapidly in the coming years. Several factors lead to this conclusion, principally the increasing monetary value of cognitive skills—that is, the combination of ability and training needed to perform complex mental work. This trend has been in evidence for some time. In 1980, for example, a male college graduate made about 30 percent more than a male high-school graduate. By 1988, he made about 60 percent more. The comparison with people who didn't even graduate from high school is starker yet.

In coming years, the price for first-rate cognitive skills will skyrocket because of changes in technology (increasingly complex at the leading edge), politics (creating increasingly complicated laws with increasingly complicated loopholes), and the size of the stakes (when a percentage point of market share is worth hundreds of millions of dollars, the people who can help you get that extra percentage point will command very large salaries). Meanwhile, real wages for low-skill jobs will increase slowly if at all, and efforts to increase wages artificially (by raising the minimum wage, for example) will backfire because the demand for low-skill labor is becoming more elastic as alternatives to human labor become numerous and affordable.

The net result is that the rich are going to constitute a major chunk of the population in the relatively near future, and this group will increasingly be the most talented. Why be depressed by this prospect, which in many ways sounds like a good thing? Because I fear its potential for producing something very like a caste society.

Try to envision what happens when 10 or 20 percent of the population has enough income to bypass the social institutions it doesn't like in ways that only the top fraction of 1 percent used to be able to do. Robert Reich, the liberal Harvard economist, has called this phenomenon the "secession of the successful." A simple example is the way that the fax, modem, and Federal Express have already made the U.S. Postal Service all but irrelevent to the way some segments of American society com-

more portentous example is the from public schools among urban

not hard to understand why people with would take these steps. For almost decades now, government has failed mis-

erably to perform its basic functions, from preserving order in public spaces to dispensing justice to providing decent education in its schools. But the reasonableness of the motives does not diminish the danger of the potential consequences.

As this American caste system takes shape, American conservatism is going to have to wrestle with its soul. Is conservatism going to follow the Latin American model, where to be conservative means seeking to preserve the mansions on the hills above the slums? Or is it going to remain true to its American heritage, where the thing to be conserved has not been primarily money or privilege but a distinctively American way of self-government and limited government?

All the forces that I can discern will tend to push American conservatism toward the Latin American model. For example, conservatives are now being joined by defectors from urban liberalism who have been mugged—sometimes figuratively, often literally. These new recruits are not steeped in conservative philosophy; they are ready to use big government whenever it suits their purposes. More broadly, the culture of the urban underclass, increasingly violent and bizarre, fosters alienation. As each new social experiment fails to diminish the size of the underclass, our increasing national wealth will make it tempting to bypass the problem by treating the inner city as an urban analogue to the Indian reservation.

This temptation will be sharpened by the increasing power of people at the upper end of the income scale to use government for their own ends. If the rich constitute 10 to 20 percent of the population, their political power will be so immense as to transform utterly the power equation. The left has been complaining for years that the rich have too much power. They ain't seen nothing yet.

It will be sadly ironic if the politics of caste are called "conservative," for the greatest bulwarks against the power of privilege are some good old-fashioned American conservative principles: enforcing strict equality of individuals before the law; prohibiting the state from favoring groups, including rich and influential ones; decentralizing government authority to the smallest possible unit. None of these principles offers a panacea, for the forces that will tend to produce an American caste system are powerful and complex. But these classic conservative ideals are needed now more than ever before, at a time when the seductions for conservatives to abandon them are increasing.

[Rule Change]

TRADING BLOWS

From a proposal, submitted in April to the Securities and Exchange Commission by the Philadelphia Stock Exchange, to amend the rules governing conduct on the exchange's trading floor. The rule change was approved in June.

The purpose of the proposed rule change is to expand the application of Regulation Four to cover abuse of the paging system and provocation of physical abuse. Regulation Four presently imposes fines for certain violations of order, such as carrying firearms on the trading floor and fighting on the trading floor.

First, the rule change proposes that the regulation be extended to cover abuse of the paging system on the trading floor. The paging system is accessible from most floor locations by telephone, connecting the speaker to a public-address system audible throughout the equity-options trading floor and contiguous areas. Abusing the system prevents its intended use as a means of communicating with exchange participants for exchange-related purposes and also disrupts ordinary floor operations by distracting and disturbing those present on the floor.

Second, the rule change proposes that the fines for fighting be reclassified into different types. It is proposed that inciting physical abuse carry a fine of $250. For example, if X provokes B into fighting with A, X shall incur a fine of $250, whether or not A and B actually fight.

With actual fighting, each abusive act (each blow, push, punch, etc.) will be classified as constituting either a minor or major incident of physical abuse. Pushing is an example of a minor act of physical abuse, carrying a fine of $[illegible]; punching is a major act of physical abuse, carrying a fine of $1,000. The determination of whether an incident is a major or minor act of physical abuse shall be made by a floor official.



"Man Traveling Northwest at 60 mph on Highway 101 in the Vicinity of Hollywood, California, on a Late Sunday Afternoon in March 1991," by Andrew Bush, a California photographer. From "Drawings, Prints, and Photographs: A Summer Selection," an exhibition held last summer at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[Teacher's Manual]

TOWARD A MORE P.C. HALLOWEEN

From Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children, *by Louise Derman-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Curriculum Task Force, a multi-ethnic group of early-childhood educators in California who are dissatisfied with the current curricula. The teacher's manual, published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in Washington, D.C., aims to help young children in "the journey toward anti-bias identity and attitudes."*

The Halloween image of the "witch"—old, ugly, wicked, and dressed in black—reflects stereotypes of gender, race, and age: Powerful women are evil; old women are ugly and scary; the color black is evil (a connection that permeates our language). Moreover, the myth of the mean, ugly, evil witch reflects a history of witch-hunting and witch-burning in Europe and North America—from the Middle Ages through the Salem witch-hunts of the seventeenth century directed against midwives and other independent women.

Adults are so accustomed to seeing this witch image as part of a "fun" holiday that it may seem "picky" to some of you to make this critique. However, some teachers are challenging it because it is so offensive, especially to many women.

At an after-school care program (children four to six years old), a teacher named Kay did these activities during the two weeks before October 31:

Day 1: Kay asks, "What are your ideas about witches?" "Bad, ugly, old" are the children's unanimous responses. Kay: "Many people do think that. What I know is that the real women we call witches aren't bad. They really helped people. These women lived a long time ago. Maybe you know about some good witches too?" (The only one the class can think of is Glinda in *The Wizard of Oz.*) Kay: "Yes, Glinda was pretty and helped people, but she didn't do what most of the women called witches did. They healed people who were sick or hurt." (The children start talking about doctors.) Kay: "Yes, the healers were like doctors." Then Kay reads the children a story she has written and illustrated.

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[Catalogue Copy]

GREGORY, THE URBAN SCARECROW

From the inaugural gift catalogue for the Anatomical Chart Company, a mail-order firm in Skokie, Illinois. The company sells products with an anatomical theme, including ties illustrated with skulls, body-part night-lights, eyeball key chains, and the "bone phone."

Gregory is a lifelike mannequin, but he is no dummy. This urban "scarecrow" is the latest weapon in the war on crime. His muscle-bound fiberglass body and intimidating stare are guaranteed to reduce crime—by his mere presence! Tough-looking Gregory is designed to sit in the passenger seat of a car, giving the appearance that the driver is not alone. Let Gregory guard your home or business by sitting him near a window or doorway. He has no legs, weighs only eleven pounds, and is very portable. Gregory's appearance can be altered by adding makeup or facial hair. Dress him in medium or large-sized men's clothing to resemble someone you know. His hands can hold objects like a book or pen to make it appear that he is reading or writing. To add more realism, his arms have three axle movements so that the hand, wrist, and elbow duplicate human-arm action. The head moves in all directions, too. Unlike store mannequins, Gregory has ears, so you can add eyeglasses too! Thousands of Gregorys have been sold to police departments; placed on the front seats of squad cars, they help to slow traffic and fight crime. Gregory is also popular with nurses, senior citizens, single women, or anyone who works odd hours and late-night shifts. For the security-conscious, adopt Gregory and put him on guard in your car, home, office, or boat. Best of all, Gregory comes with a thirty-day guarantee.



GREG-1 Gregory Mannequin.....$375.00

have been modifying their insurance plans every which way: They have switched insurers, begun to self-insure, promoted health maintenance organizations and other plans limiting choice of doctor, required second opinions for surgery and other controls, imposed greater employee cost-sharing in premiums and higher co-payments and deductibles. But while one or another measure may have provided some temporary relief, they have failed to produce any long-term solution. At best, firms have managed to shift costs to someone else; at worst, they have simply abandoned providing health insurance altogether. The net result is that after years of efforts at cost containment, managers are frustrated and many employees are angry and fearful as they see their health benefits rolled back.

This "desocialization" of health insurance increasingly exposes the middle class to the same insecurity as the uninsured poor. Few people under age sixty-five can be entirely confident today that they and their families will continue at all times to be protected by health insurance. They may be conservative and prudent and may even vote Republican; still, if they develop a serious illness, lose their job, or change employer, they cannot count on the private insurance system to protect them. In effect, the market-driven responses of employers and private insurers are undermining the traditional middle-class insulation from health costs that has made it so difficult to construct an alliance for health insurance reform across class lines.

The middle class also has other objective causes for concern. One major reason why take-home pay has stagnated in real terms since the early 1970s is the increasing cost of health benefits as well as the share of taxes now taken by health programs. It is true that many who are still comfortably insured do not see how much health costs are hurting them, since the costs are partly hidden in employer contributions to health plans, tax subsidies, and complex public budgets. Yet hardly anyone, least of all the business and political leaders who confront total costs most directly, disagrees that the system is dangerously out of control.

Today, the economic pain caused by the rising cost of health care has become so great that it is obliging leaders in business as well as politics to do something rare and difficult: rethink their assumptions. Many have long clung to the premise that they could control health costs within the existing framework of health care financing. Besides, those who had doubts saw little choice; challenging the

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with the framework, all to
broken down confidence that
structural change will work.
recognition of the need for sys-
tem-wide reforms fundamentally alters the pol-
sal insurance.

the 1980s, with national health
off the agenda, many advocates of
universal coverage concluded that rather than
change the system they would try only to
extend it. They defined their objective as sim-
ply filling in the gaps in health insurance at
the least political cost. Consequently, they
came to support a variety of incremental steps,
including requiring firms to provide insurance
to their employees and broadening eligibility
for Medicaid.

Incremental reform aimed at minimizing
opposition, but it did so with little regard for
overall costs. That's because this typically adds
new people to the ranks of the insured and
creates new benefits for some currently under-
insured, while taking nothing away from the
doctors, hospitals, and insurance industry.
Such an approach raises total costs, often mak-
ing the system even less efficient, but it has
the political virtue of minimizing the tax bur-
den of universal coverage. And since most
public discussion of the issue confuses tax costs
with total social costs, the supporters of incre-
mental reform reasonably expect that most
people will think the approach to be cheaper
than national health insurance, which it
almost certainly is not. Besides, by increasing
the stream of revnue flowing into health care,
incremental refons benefit doctors, hospitals,
and other proviers, who are among the most
enthusiastic supprters of such measures.

These politicl considerations are shaping
the current debae about health reform among
Democrats. TheMitchell plan takes the path
of incremental rform, with an additional step
(or is it a bow?)in the direction of cost con-
tainment. By requiring employers to provide
coverage or payto a public program for the
uninsured that ould replace Medicaid, the
plan both minitizes tax costs and places the
burden of new txes on a seemingly culpable
party (cheap ad irresponsible employers).
And by settingexpenditure targets that are
voluntary, thiapproach makes a gesture
toward cost cotainment without actually
enforcing limi and thereby antagonizing
health care provd

The short-ten political logic here is power-
ful. Frustrated a previous campaigns by the
opposition of oranized physicians, proponents
of universal insrance now see an opportunity
to win their suport and to avoid arousing the
resistance of thinsurance and pharmaceutical
industries. But recisely because of its accom-
modation of heth care interests, the Mitchell
plan does littleto repair the problems that
generated high ealth costs in the first place.
The legislation ust may be enacted, particu-
larly if the Bushadministration recognizes that
by accepting sne version of this approach it
will deprive th opposition of its best cam-
paign issue in th Nine

Indeed, failu to control health costs or to
change insurace-industry practices will
almost certainl exacerbate current problems
for the middle lass, for business, and for the
economy at laze. Even the currently unin-
sured who gaincoverage under this program
will see its valu erode unless there is real con-
trol of health osts. In the past, when confi-
dence in the crent framework of insurance
was still stron, it may have made sense to
accept the polical necessity to build on it.
But to build oit today, when its failures are
manest, is to underestimate the
potetial and need for change.

The alternave of comprehensive reform,
as I understandt, does not necessarily entail a
governmental surance plan. The key ques-
tion is not whoperates the insurance system
but under wha rules it operates. In the Euro-
pean countries hat insure their entire popula-
tions at a costsignificantly lower than that
which Americ pays for health care, the gov-
ernments do nt necessarily own the hospitals,
employ the dctors, or run the insurance



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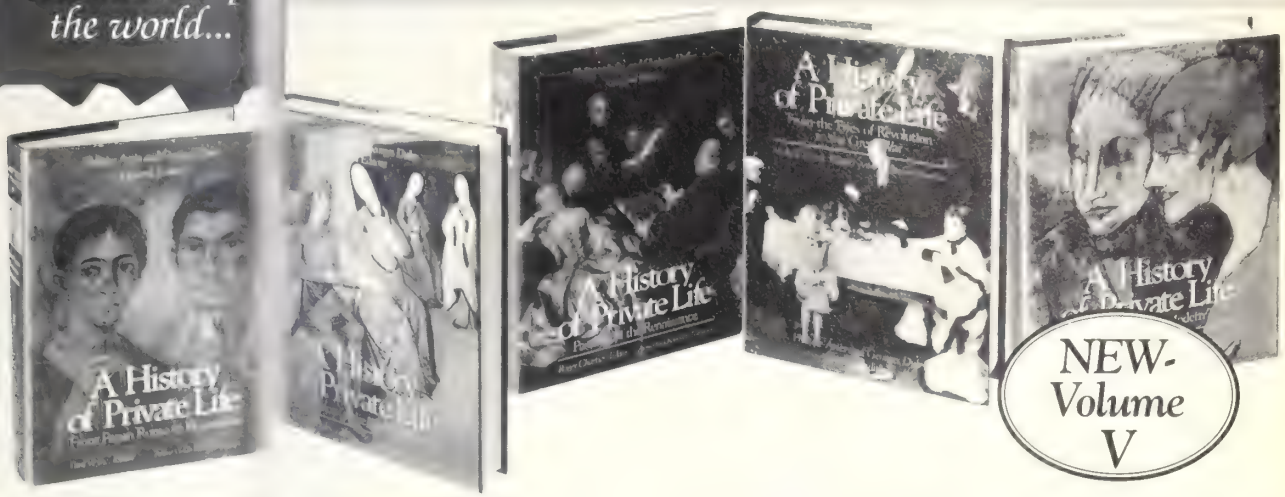
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plans. But nearly all the governments set limits on health spending and establish rules that apply across their health care systems: setting [illegible]ngs on budgets for hospitals and doctors, limiting and regulating capital spending, regulating the rates that insurance companies charge, and insisting that insurance payments to providers constitute payment in full—to prevent the providers from using the insurance system as a floor for ever higher charges.

The keys to success are, first, "hard" budget constraints that force decision-makers—from physicians to managers—to develop styles of practice and plans of investment that make conservative use of the nation's resources; and, second, a framework for insurance that does not segregate the poor in a second-rate public plan or allow insurers to dump onto the public sector those whose medical history puts them at the greatest risk.

While the public debate in America is warming up to more fundamental reforms than those Senator Mitchell is proposing, debate remains constricted by a virtually unshakable conviction that any solution will be costly. Most Americans have firmly fixed in their minds the idea that national health insurance necessarily entails spending more money on medical care. That was certainly the case years ago, when a national health insurance program would have produced a sudden surge in health care spending. But now the United States has far higher health costs than do other Western countries; we spend more than 12 percent of our gross national product on health care, compared with only 8–9 percent in Canada and Western Europe. Why higher costs here—the one country without universal coverage? Almost certainly because we did not enact national health insurance years ago. What Americans have feared as too costly has elsewhere evolved into a system for controlling costs. It could here too: The additional expense of covering the uninsured is now far outweighed by the potential for cost containment that an administratively streamlined national program could provide.

Contrary to what many people assume, the lesson of Canada, Germany, and other countries is not that costs can be controlled only by rationing beneficial care. The chief savings are to be found in a reconstruction of health insurance along administratively simpler lines and in the constraints on health care provider income that a unified system affords. Of course, to secure these savings requires confronting entrenched financial interests. Ultimately, the real determinant of the cost of any health care reform is not the technical details of the proposal but the political support behind it. A political leadership capable of mobilizing the middle class and American business on the basis of their real interests could use national health insurance to achieve the results that other countries have seen: uni-

[Solicitation Letter]

TRIMMING THE STORY

From a letter sent in August 1990 by Paul M. Insel, the editor in chief of Healthline *magazine, to Jodi Godfrey, who at the time was a public relations representative for Weight Watchers. Several months before this letter was written,* Healthline *had requested and received $25,000 in "sponsorship fees" from Weight Watchers in exchange for a positive review of the company's frozen entrees. After Weight Watchers declined the offer of further sponsorship made in the letter below, Insel offered the same deal to Nutri/System, a competing manufacturer of diet foods. Nutri/System paid the $25,000 sponsorship fee and was rated first, above Weight Watchers, in a survey of diet programs in the May 1991 issue of* Healthline. *After Nutri/System used their number-one ranking in an ad campaign, Weight Watchers sued Nutri/System for false and misleading advertising.*

Dear Jodi:

I am happy that Weight Watchers liked our treatment of their products. We feel they are a first-rate company and are pleased to have them as a sponsor.

Healthline is collaborating with the Stanford Heart Disease Prevention Program to produce a special May 1991 issue that will focus on weight control and good food choice. This issue will be distributed through nineteen supermarket chains and reach 5 million people.

We would like to promote two Weight Watchers products for this issue: the frozen-food products and the weight-control program. We propose to feature both products in separate articles with appropriate pictures.

Because of our history with Weight Watchers, we propose a two-for-one arrangement by which we promote two products for a total sponsorship fee of $25,000.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Cordially,
Paul M. Insel
Editor in Chief

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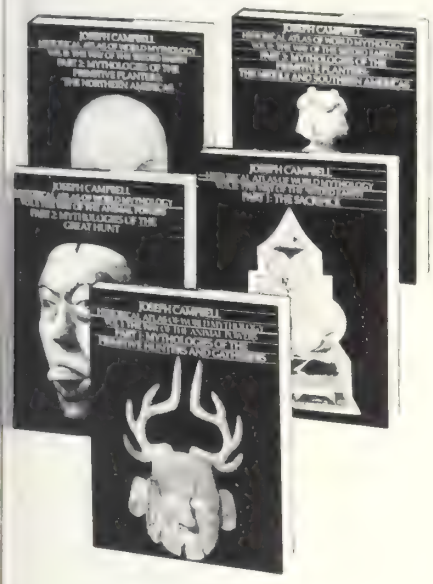
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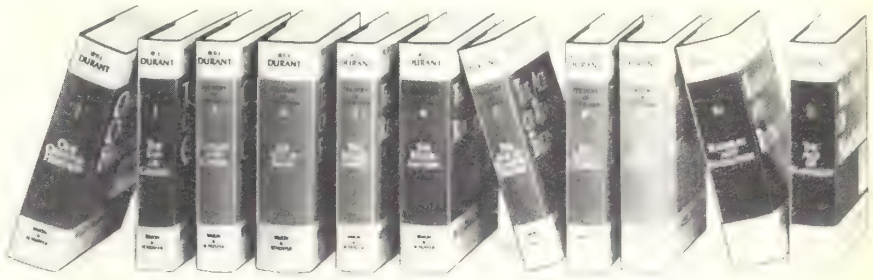
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coverage at a moderate and stable percentage of national income. But while the nation's leadership has begun to rethink its assumptions about health care, it has not yet broken loose from a skittish solicitude for established interests that fixes in place the current system of health care finance and precludes the fundamental reforms we need.

[Found Poems]

THE BARD OF BASEBALL

From The Verse of P. F. Rizzuto, an occasional column by Hart Seeley and Tom Peyer that appeared this summer in The Village Voice. *Seeley and Peyer compiled these poems from commentary by Phil "Scooter" Rizzuto during baseball games broadcast on WPIX-TV in New York City.*

ALIENATION

I think my head shrinks a little
In this indoor stadium.

I am. . .

The mike is getting bigger.
And I have to tighten it.
(*May 2, 1987, Yankees vs. Twins. Bottom of the third, Tommy John pitching to Al Newman.*)

GILIAD

I was with Gil McDougald the other day.
Oh boy
He looks great.
Playing golf over in Spring Lakes Golf Club
Sad thing is that
You know,
He's totally deaf now.
FOUL!
HE STAYS ALIVE!
Still got a great sense of humor.
But he had to retire.
Because he was getting all those phone calls
In his business
And he just couldn't—
No way could he hear anything.
So he sold the business.
Very happy.
They love him down there at Spring Lake.

But I was very happy
'Cause he does talk and tell stories and. . .
He's not a good listener.
But one thing he told me
That I was very happy about. . .
LOW! BALL FOUR!

WHAT AN EYE BY NOKES!!
How do you like that?
Behind 0 and 2 and he works his way for a walk!
You know what McDougald told me when he saw me?
He hadn't seen me for a while.
He said, "I wanna tell you something.
You're not as ugly as you look on TV,"
He said to me.
I said, "Thanks, Gil."
(*May 25, 1991, Yankees vs. Orioles. Top of the ninth, Mike Flanagan pitching to Matt Nokes.*)

APODOSIS

Fly ball right field.
It's gonna drop in!
No, it's not gonna drop in.
Happy forty-sixth wedding anniversary,
Thomas and Mary Anne Clearwater.
That's it.
The last three, six, nine, twelve Yankees went down in order.
So that's it.
The game is over.
(*June 4, 1991, Yankees vs. Blue Jays. Bottom of the ninth, Tom Henke pitching to Pat Kelly.*)

[Essay]

BERLIN: IF DOGS RUN FREE

From "Of Dogs and Germans," in The German Comedy: Scenes of Life After the Wall, *a collection of essays by Peter Schneider, published this month by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Schneider, who lives in Berlin, is the author of* The Wall Jumper. *His essay "Concrete and Irony" appeared in the April 1990 issue of* Harper's Magazine. *Translated from the German by Philip Boehm.*

When God created the German, he gave him the German shepherd as companion. And I for one will not be swayed by any suggestion that the dog was originally Scottish or Irish, for if the German shepherd wasn't German by birth, it has certainly proven itself German by choice. At every turning point in modern German history, the German shepherd has stuck to its post with steadfast determination. When Adolf Hitler was so disappointed with his Germans that he shot himself inside his bunker, he left not only his people without their *Führer* but a German shepherd without its master. And when the Berlin Wall fell and Erich Honecker fled to the Soviet Union, he


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was abandoning not only 17 million Germans but thousands of German shepherds as well.

Of course, in the latter case, it's safe to presume that Honecker had no personal relationship with his many four-legged sentries; after all, they didn't just guard his house in Wandlitz but the entire East German state. Nevertheless, these animals so closely connected with the Germans were the first to feel the wounds left by the cutting edge of history on November 9, 1989. Overnight they lost their jobs as well as their homes in the kennels along the border.

[Résumé]

A BYELORUSSIAN GO-GETTER

This résumé, from a man in Byelorussia, was received by the personnel office of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in June. The school has received more than 700 letters from Soviet citizens seeking employment since a Soviet employment guide published the name and address of MIT's director of personnel without the university's knowledge. MIT has withheld the name of the résumé writer.

Education: I'm _____, finished the textile institute in Ivanovo. My diploma's specialization: automatic productions.

Fields: I'm broker and musician now.

Special skills: concrete worker (I have the trade certificate), metal worker (trade certificate), roof worker, cook, wood-cutter, office-cleaner, etc.

Other activities: I'm vocal, drums, and harp in the country music band, writing music and verses just a bit. I can send one upon request.

Reference: available upon request.

Personal data: My health is good and my English You can see here. I have the wife and the daughter, and I'd like to work to keep them.

I agree with the every dirty work that You'll can to offer me and I ready to be everywhere You'll need me (without my family).

I can send You more detail information if one must be.

REMEMBER: If You employ me, You save Your money!

Thanks beforehand.

The true dimensions of their service didn't come to light until after the Wall came down. All told, the East Germans kept more than 5,000 dogs along the border, including approximately 2,500 watchdogs and 2,700 so-called horse dogs. They weren't all German shepherds, for in the egalitarian workers' state, these aristocrats had no choice but to share space with Rottweilers, schnauzers, and all types of mixed breeds.

Germans on both sides of the Wall were moved by the news that thousands of German shepherds had lost their masters during the night of November 9. They feared the worst. In the collective imagination, the desperate, forlorn dogs gathered along desolate stretches of border to howl at their one remaining employer, the moon. People even expected to see wild and dangerous packs of homeless animals prowling the suddenly accessible streets of West Berlin.

But nothing like that happened. Immediately after the Wall opened, the West German *Tierschutzverein* (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) began negotiating with the East German Ministry for National Defense. After many tortuous special sessions, the society finally announced in January 1990 that 2,500 Wall dogs would settle in West Germany during the following eight weeks. Hundreds of sympathetic single people, along with dozens of families with many children, spontaneously expressed their willingness to adopt. But a shadow soon darkened this bright moment of East-West accord, as the dogs became the occasion for a typically German dispute—this time between Western and Eastern shepherd experts.

The news of the impending transfer unleashed the wrath of the West German German Shepherd Association, which accused the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of insufficient expertise and carelessness. The association claimed that the border dogs were much too "dangerous" for inexperienced animal lovers. They had been kept "without social contact with humans," they would be increasingly "difficult to integrate into families" as they grew older, and they were "scarcely capable of being re-educated for normal daily life." Moreover, dogs that were "too heavily predispositioned" would be far better off staying "over there."

The West German mass media immediately cashed in on the excitement. Front-page articles spoke of "bloodhounds" and "killer beasts"; the dogs were described as antisocial and psychically unstable—many had even had their incisors sharpened to a fine point with a

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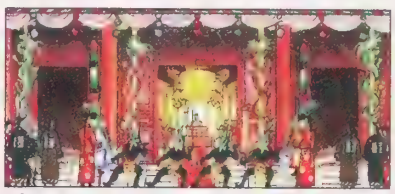
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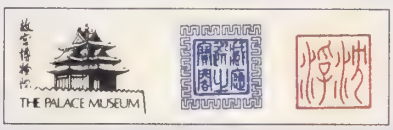
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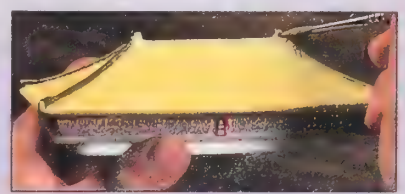
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From "Fish Tank Sonata," a series of photographs by Arthur Tress. "Fish Tank Sonata" will be on display at the Visual Studies Workshop Galleries in Rochester, New York, from November 29 through January 31, 1992, the first stop in a five-year traveling exhibition. Tress lives in New York City.

special file. One thousand of the dogs were so dangerous they needed to be put to sleep. Dogs that had been raised under Stalinism were too "influenced by their environment" to be suitable as house pets.

These allegations cut the East German dog-keepers to the quick, and for perhaps the first time in history, friends and foes of dogs joined hands in common protest. Experts from East German animal shelters spoke of a Western smear campaign reminiscent of the Cold War. The West German press exaggerated two pathological biters (that really did have to be put to sleep) into 1,000—and the reason was obvious: If 2,500 East German dogs suddenly flooded the market—where they currently sold for $60 apiece—the overall price would surely drop. In order to protect the Western pure-bloods from this devaluation, their Eastern brothers and sisters were being systematically defamed. The East Germans claimed that, in fact, the poor border dogs were really the "last victims of Stalinism," and as such deserved special care and understanding. Far from being misanthropic, the dogs that had served with the border patrols were actually very much "in need of love": Because they had worked in shifts, always serving at least four masters, they had been deprived of the proper master-dog relationship. What's more, the dogs were uneducated and completely incompetent; they couldn't even bite on command. Really, they had just been "dummy dogs," running back and forth along the Wall, the harmless embodiments of their own myth—living scarecrows for humans. Not a single refugee had ever even been nipped by one of these dogs. On the contrary, every Wall-jumper who had given them a friendly click of the tongue was welcome to pet and scratch them behind the ears. These purported descendants of the Baskerville hound had only two things on their mind: a humble meal and a little tenderness. In fact, one West German buyer even returned a particularly majestic specimen, indignant that the animal hadn't uttered a peep when burglars broke into his house.

The East German defenders of the homeless border dogs grew downright alarmed when they realized that the negative propaganda had actually enticed whole flocks of undesirable buyers. Pimps looking for a "killer beast" strolled up and down in front of the East German kennels; dog maniacs suffering from Napoleonic complexes saw the opportunity to compensate for their own small stature by acquiring a gigantic German shepherd. The orphaned dogs' East German wardens grew more suspicious with every passing day. They began to subject Western clients to oral and even written tests designed to separate "serious" dog lovers from "dubious" ones.

Unfortunately, only a small number of the German shepherds could be placed in East German homes, due to the well-known shortage of living space. Moreover, forty years of

antifascist training had evidently affected the taste of the East German populace, who now preferred house pets that could not possibly be identified as symbols of power, aggression, or domination: parakeets, cats, and miniature rabbits.

The dispute has now subsided. Almost all the border dogs have been successfully adopted, and there's little talk of problems of integration. Many of the new arrivals that first reacted to canned food in all its Western variety with upturned noses, or even diarrhea, have successfully adjusted. Most have overcome their fear of elevators and escalators. They are no longer afraid of unknown canine species, and have stopped running away at the sight of miniature poodles wearing knitted caps and leather jackets. Almost all are proving themselves willing to learn, even to the point of understanding commands in dialects other than Saxon.

But whenever they accompany their new Western masters on walks near where the Wall once stood, they are suddenly deaf to every call and run their programmed beat without veering right or left. The Wall itself has disappeared so completely that even native Berliners can't always say exactly where it used to stand. Only the Wall dogs move as if tethered by an unseen leash, with absolute certainty, following the old border along its wild zigzags through the city—just as though they were looking for, or maybe missing, something. . .

But perhaps this story is only a legend—like the Wall itself.

[Critique]

HAMLET, PRINCE OF CO-DEPENDENCY

From an article by Randy Rolfe in the March-April issue of Changes: For and About Adult Children, *a bimonthly magazine for adult children of dysfunctional families, published by Health Communications in Deerfield Beach, Florida.*

Before Laurence Olivier played Hamlet, modern critics saw the prince as a monument to indecision, a would-be hero who did not grasp his own limitations. When Olivier played the role, he adopted a Freudian interpretation, giving his character an Oedipus complex. Since then, much has changed in our understanding of human thought and behavior. Today, we need to examine whether co-dependency is at the heart of Hamlet's affliction.

Like many people crippled by co-dependency, Hamlet is obsessed by the motives and behaviors of others. He spends more time trying to figure out his mother's designs, his girlfriend's passions, and his uncle's murderous conscience than he spends discovering his own desires. When he does consider his feelings, he sees himself as a victim. His wit and sarcasm, mastery of doublespeak, perpetual rationalizing, conflicting views of love, fascination with roles, and uncanny simulation of madness all fit the co-dependent adult child's model.

But do his parents fit?

Hamlet's father, esteemed by "all the known world," was an impossible act for his son to follow. As a ghost, we see him stern and distant. Successful revenge is Hamlet's last chance to win his father's approval, but

[Retorts]

SAYING NO: THE RIMSHOT APPROACH

This flier is distributed by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Substance Abuse Prevention to teachers, principals, and parents of elementary and junior high school students. Copies of the flier are often requested for fairs, workshops, or school events.

Here are some snappy answers to the question: Want some alcohol or other drugs?

No, thanks, I'd rather walk my pet python.

No way, I'm in a skateboarding contest today.

Uh-uh, I need all my wits about me to write my new rap song.

With *you?*

No, thanks, I'm saving my bad breath for pepperoni pizza.

You must be kidding! If I'm going to ruin my body, I'd rather do it with a hot fudge sundae.

No, thank you, I need all my brain cells, so I'd rather have noodle soup.

No, thanks, my coach will leave me on the bench.

I'd rather not. I'm too special.

No, thanks, I don't like the taste.

No, thanks, I'm all-American. I'll stick to milk.

he destroys himself in the process.

Overprotected by Hamlet's father, his mother subordinates her feelings to her imagined duty to her husband's first love, the kingdom. She expects respect and obedience from Hamlet, not love. At last, filled with shame, she kills herself.

Clearly there are co-dependent patterns in the royal household. But is there also evidence of actual addiction? In fact, images of drink and drunkenness fill the play. Hamlet tells how the "heavy-handed revel" disgusts him and gives Denmark a bad reputation among other nations.

Let's take a closer look at Hamlet's symptoms. Hamlet finds it impossible to trust or love anyone. In the case of both his father and his girlfriend, he professes his love in retrospect, after they have died. In Hamlet's madness we detect a fantasy of the adult child—he can let people know his darkest thoughts about them only when they are powerless to respond.

We see him as energetic, handsome, skilled at drama, fencing, and poetry, brilliant and witty, quick to forgive, strong in his resolve, romantic in his ideals, and deeply inquisitive about the meaning of life. But he twice talks of ending his life and his pain. He carries unrelenting guilt. When he looks at his girlfriend, he sees in her eyes "all my sins remembered." He is a victim of his own reactions to others.

Although Shakespeare gives us glimpses of a spiritual awakening, Hamlet remains the ultimate adult child of tragedy.

[How-to]

AMERICA'S LONELIEST HOME VIDEOS

From "Single-Parent and Blended-Family Videos," a chapter in Making Fun Family Videos, *by Carole Chouinard and Randall Baer, published by Andrews and McMeel in Kansas City, Missouri.*

It's a fact of life these days that most families will sooner or later be touched by divorce. We hope it won't happen in your immediate nuclear unit, but statistics show that somewhere in your extended family someone will eventually face the issue of divorce and blended families. So what do you do about your videos? How do you keep your fun family outlook when your version of family doesn't fit neatly into a mom-dad-children mold? The answer is: Keep making those videos.

Just because you are separated or divorced doesn't mean that birthdays and holidays don't mean as much to your kids. In fact, it may be even more important for you to record your celebrations in order to show the children that life goes on.

Being a single parent doesn't mean that you have to choose between documenting events and participating in them. It's important to keep making videos, but it's even more important to be a part of whatever is going on. You need to be there helping to open presents at Christmas or walking in with the birthday cake at parties.

To make all of this happen, you'll need a tripod. By mounting the camcorder on a tripod, you'll be able to tape the event and participate in it at the same time. The resulting static shot isn't ideal, but it's not the worst thing in the world either. Until your children are old enough to share in using the camcorder, a tripod may be your best home-video friend.

The blended family adds a new twist to fun family videos. Even though the adjustment period for the new family may not be smooth sailing, it's important to continue making videos. Getting the holidays and everyday life on tape will be a concrete sign to all concerned that this is a new family, creating a new life together.

In fact, you may find it wise to use your camcorder to help the new siblings interact. Why not let the older children take the camera and create their own video? You could encourage the kids to act out a current film, or a favorite television show or book.

It also helps to watch family videos. Children love to see themselves acting silly and love to relive the excitement of birthdays and holidays. Viewing the new-family videos together can help cement that family bond.

Although it may require extra fortitude on your part, you should allow your older children to take the video camera when they visit the parent they don't live with. You should encourage your children to record life from their own perspective—and their perspective happens to include life with your ex-spouse.

If you have younger children, whichever parent has them at the moment should also have access to the camcorder. This way those special moments will always be recorded. If the kids are spending every other weekend with dad, the camcorder should accompany them. This doesn't mean that dad has to use the equipment every other weekend, but it will be there just in case, as it was when everyone lived under one roof.



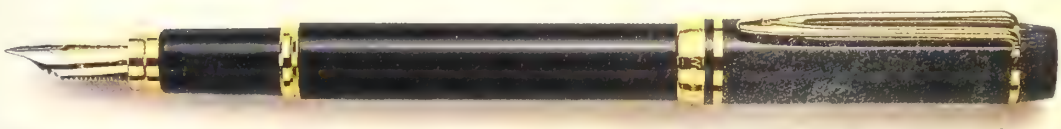
He grew up on beluga caviar and Bizet's Carmen.

He had a champion King Charles spaniel
and a '52 roadster named Wanda.

He had Europe at his feet and the world at his door.

But he never had a Waterman.

How could I have known he had been so deprived.



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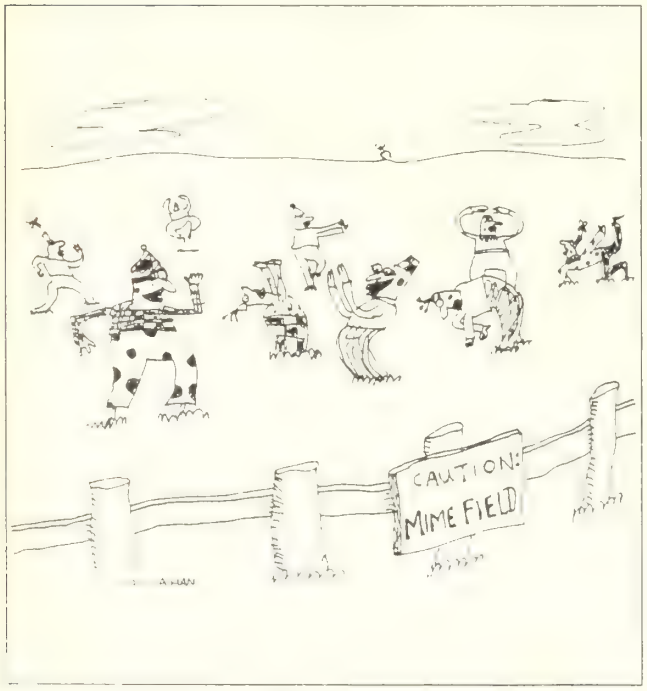
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BIDDING FOR YOKO

By Gillon Aitken, from the July 25 London Review of Books. *Aitken is the chairman of a London literary agency.*

I have a record of a check written by me on December 22, 1981. The check is in the sum of £780.50, and the payee is Sotheby's; the counterfoil in my checkbook bears the designation "Lennon—tie." The £780.50 breaks down as follows: tie—£700; 10 percent buyer's commission to Sotheby's—£70; 15 percent value-added tax on that commission—£10.50. Seven hundred pounds for a tie? Yes, that is what I paid. The tie was short and thin and black, and it had a bluish, greasy sheen that proclaimed its service. It carried no designer signature or label. It did come, however, with a "certification": This short, thin, black tie had a provenance. It had been worn by John Lennon at a London concert in the 1960s. The letter of "certification," signed by the impresario concerned and by Lennon himself, confirmed the association between tie and wearer.

I also have a record of a check I wrote on January 27, 1982. This is for £38.24; the payee in this case was Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. I will come back to this later.



From Digesting the Child Within, and Other Cartoons to Live By, *by John Callahan, published by Quill/William*

I never met John Lennon. Within weeks of his cruel death, I did meet his widow, Yoko Ono. We had a mutual friend, Deezia, an Englishwoman living in New York City. Yoko drew comfort from Deezia's good sense and spiritual gifts, which were imprecise but invariably compassionate.

Perhaps by some enchantment of Deezia's crystal ball, I was summoned to New York to discuss the possibility of Yoko's writing a book honoring her late husband and their life together. At first, I had been received ("Take your shoes off, please") in Yoko's gloomy ground-floor office apartment in the gloomy Dakota building; later, we were to have our conversations in her charming all-white drawing room, frequently lunching off an exclusive and unlimited diet of caviar of the finest quality. Unhappily, from my point of view, the literary project enjoyed no such preferment.

I saw Yoko for the last time, at her house on Long Island, on the morning following the anniversary of John's death. She and a friend, Sam, had invited me to spend the evening with them. It was a surprisingly cheerful occasion—lots of caviar and laughter. The next morning, I thanked her for her hospitality, and we said good-bye. A day or two later I flew back to London. I did not expect Yoko and I would be in further touch.

Around 8:00 P.M. on Monday, December 21—a little over a week afterward—the telephone rang in my house in London. It was Sam, Yoko's friend.

"Gillon? Look, Yoko and I need your help. You'll be doing us a big favor. There's a sale of Beatles' stuff—pop stuff, memorabilia. It's the first of its kind. We can't get ahold of the guy in London who usually bids for Yoko, and we've got to have someone at the sale, someone to bid. It's important, and it's tomorrow."

"Sure, I'll help," I said. "Tell me where the sale is and when it starts."

"Hold on a minute."

Yoko came on the line. "Hi, Gillon. I've got the catalogue here. It's at Sotheby's. The sale starts at 11:00 A.M. There's never been a sale like it. Lots of John's things are there—and there are some I've got to have; I must get them."

I listened carefully as she began to describe these essentials: a bundle of records, some sheet music, a tie, a "performance suit," a drawing by John, something else. She spoke as if I would possess as vivid a sense of the identity of these artifacts as she did.

"Yoko," I interrupted. "You must give me the

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lot numbers of what you want me to bid for."

It took some time to identify the items of Yoko's particular interest; some items were more particular than others.

"Now listen, Gillon," she said eventually. "The bundle of records, Lot 45, I'd like to have them, and push up the price to get them, but don't worry too much if you miss. Get the performance suit, Lot 60—you must get the suit, I've got to have the performance suit. Next, John's pen-and-ink 'medallion' self-portrait, Lot 80—it's like a medal, with John in the middle, sitting naked on the floor, with a birthday message to a friend running 'round the edge. It's very small, on India paper. It was a sort of birthday card John drew for a friend. We must have it, we must have it back. You must get it at any cost, at any cost. And you must get the tie—Lot 98—at any cost."

I had become extremely apprehensive. Any cost for the medallion and the tie, perhaps for the suit as well? What did "any cost" mean? What did "push up the price" mean?

"I think I understand. Push up the price on the records, but don't go over the top. Go over the top, if necessary, for the suit, the medallion, and the tie. You say 'any cost.' Do you mean that literally? Is there any point at which I should drop out?"

"No, no, don't drop out. There are no upper limits for these things. They must be obtained."

"Yes, Yoko."

The next morning was wretched—very cold, blustery rain. I arrived at Sotheby's, soaked, at 11:15 A.M. A considerable crowd had gathered on the pavement outside the entrance to the building. I pushed my way into the foyer, announcing in an embarrassed sotto voce that I was a "bidder" and had to take my place. I obtained a catalogue and struggled to the doors of the main saleroom. The room was packed—no sitting or standing room.

"Standing room upstairs—telephone bidding," I was informed by a harassed official. I had not reckoned on telephone bidding.

The upstairs saleroom was like a village hall: rows of uncomfortable wooden chairs, a large area of standing room behind them. It was very crowded. I maneuvered myself, heedless of objections, to a position behind the last row of chairs. At least I was visible. At a desk on a platform sat a young lady with a telephone permanently at her ear. From the main saleroom below was transmitted the conduct of the auction. Evidently, the auctioneer announced the lots and took bids from below; the telephonist took the bids from above, and the bids were conveyed, competitively, to each other.

There was an atmosphere of urgency and confusion in the room. To this day, I remain uncertain of the precise sequence of events that followed.

"Lot 45—an important collection of Mr. John Lennon's early recordings, details in the catalogue. Shall we start at £300? Who'll start the bidding at £300?"

What did he mean—start at £300? The catalogue signaled an upper estimate of £250.

"Thank you, sir. £300—and £325 from upstairs—and £350—and £375—and £400 from upstairs—and £425—and £450 from upstairs—and £475—and £500—and £550 from upstairs..."

Stay out of this one, I thought—it's getting out of hand. "Try hard for that" were Yoko's instructions for Lot 45. The final price was £650. I hadn't raised a finger or an eyebrow. I suppressed a wave of shame. What did it matter? Upper estimate—£250; sale price—£650. Wasn't that trying hard? I thought so. In the pace of the auction, it was easy to believe that

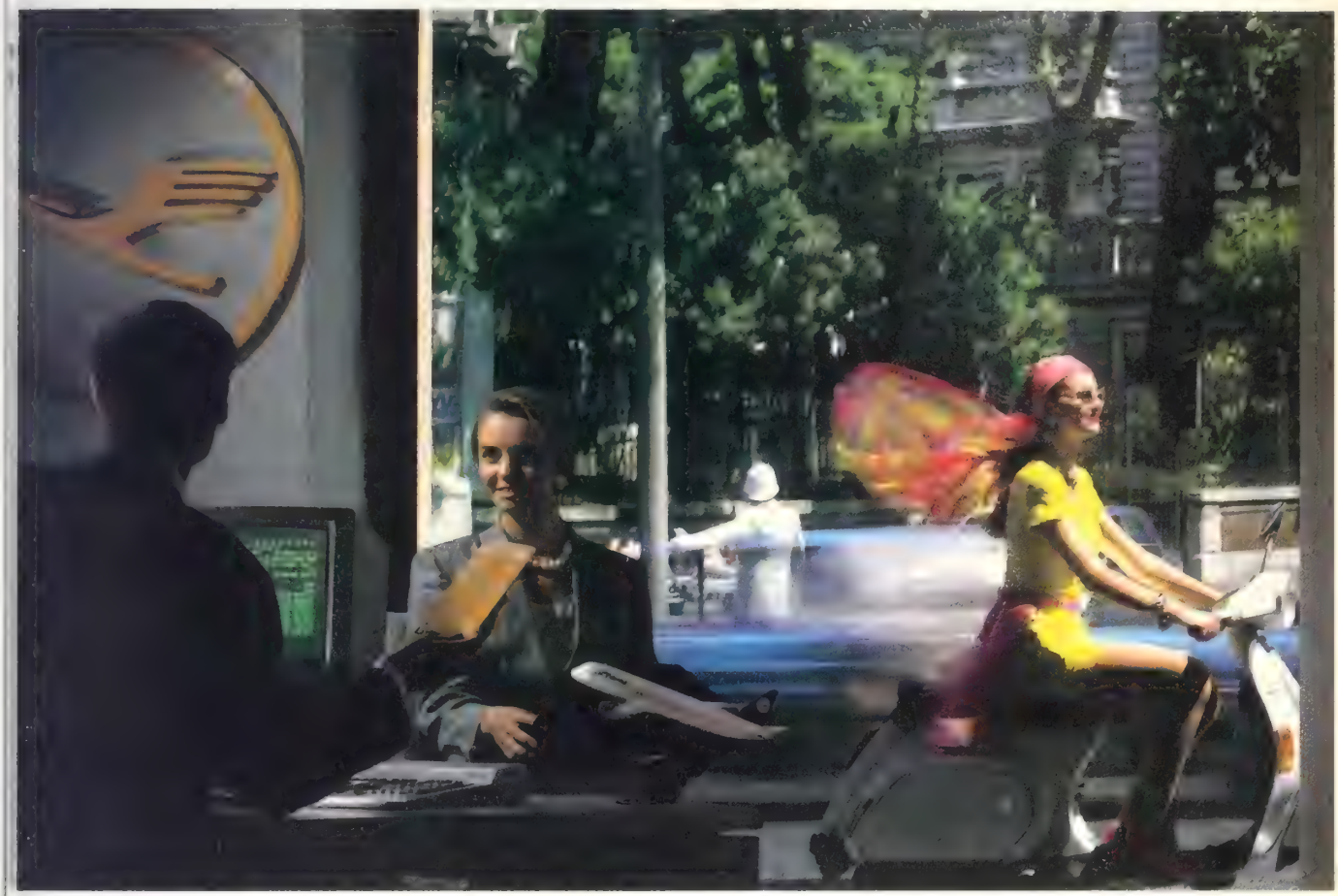
[Salutation]

IS THAT EVERYONE?

From the opening of a speech by Garry Trudeau, the cartoonist, at Yale University's Class Day last May.

Dean Kagan, distinguished faculty, parents, friends, graduating seniors, Secret Service agents, class agents, people of class, people of color, colorful people, people of height, the vertically constrained, people of hair, the differently coiffed, the optically challenged, the temporarily sighted, the insightful, the out of sight, the out-of-towners, the Eurocentrics, the Afrocentrics, the Afrocentrics with Eurailpasses, the eccentrically inclined, the sexually disinclined, people of sex, sexy people, sexist pigs, animal companions, friends of the earth, friends of the boss, the temporarily employed, the differently employed, the differently optioned, people with options, people with stock options, the divestiturists, the deconstructionists, the home constructionists, the homeboys, the homeless, the temporarily housed at home, and, God save us, the permanently housed at home:

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rmonious union which has made Ballantine's the
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the quality and consistency of the blend.

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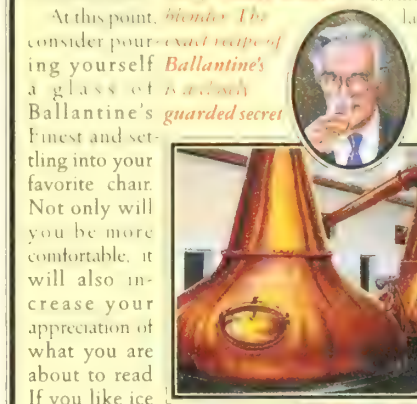
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Even when it comes to their favorite dram, it is rare to find Scotch drinkers familiar with the art of blending. Since we blend a fair amount of Scotch, we've taken it upon ourselves to clear up the confusion.

At this point, consider pouring yourself a glass of Ballantine's Finest and settling into your favorite chair. Not only will you be more comfortable, it will also increase your appreciation of what you are about to read. If you like ice with your Scotch, let it melt a bit.

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[illegible] pushed things along.

Next, Lot 60—the "performance suit." The first item that had to be "obtained at any cost." Upper estimate—£750. Forget that—some fool's going to pay at least double.

[Poem]

GROWING UP

By Richard Afari Baafour. "Growing Up" appeared in the Summer Literary Review, *a special issue devoted to recent African writing. The quarterly is published by Fairleigh Dickinson University. Baafour is a civil servant in Accra, Ghana.*

After the politicians
have left with signed copies
of the bilateral agreement
and the assurance of
a constituency for cash
the tycoons will come
it does not matter
at whose invitation
provided someone has
signed off the rationing
and the state of emergency

Tell them we have
anticipated their coming
and our best hospitality
awaits them...

We have repealed old laws
if they insist we shall
make new ones, it won't take
more than a stroke of pen
or maybe a gunshot or two

As long as they come
with money and machines
they could count on our goodwill
they could bring along
cash registers the freedom
to count in earnest
and if that suits them
a myth or two to keep up
an image or save a face

but please tell them not to
bother how to profess love
for our people or faith in us
all that old fashioned stuff
for the sincerity of words
doesn't matter any more
since our last economic crisis

"Lot 60—suit worn by Mr. John Lennon, with signed certification. Important piece of apparel. £1,000—and £1,100—and £1,200—and £1,300—and £1,400—and £1,500—and £1,600 from upstairs—and £1,700..."

Not more than fifteen seconds had passed. I waved frantically at the telephonist, who conveyed my bid. "And £1,800 from upstairs," the auctioneer intoned, but carried swiftly on. "And £1,900." the telephonist solicited my further interest. I nodded. "And £2,000 from upstairs—and £2,300." Big jump, I thought. I'll have one more go. I nodded again. "And £2,500 from upstairs—and £2,800."

I froze—and the price froze at £2,800. I was dazed by my cowardice. Arguably, I had greater authority than anyone else in the building to "obtain at any cost"—yet my nerve had cracked.

"Lot 80—pen-and-ink drawing, medallion form on India paper, self-portrait by Mr. John Lennon, nude, birthday greeting to a friend around the edge. £200, am I bid?"

That was more like it. Upper estimate—£150; auctioneer's starting bid—£200. This was going to be easy—if it was the last thing I did, I was going to make damned sure of getting the medallion. (The little sketch was illustrated in the catalogue. It had an extraordinary, innocent charm. With very few, sure strokes, Lennon had caught his own likeness. The pose was seated, cross-legged upon the ground, the gaze upon the world one of cheerful bewilderment.)

The bidding was under way. "£200—£225—£250—£275—£300." In units of £25, it quickly reached £500; in units of £50, it moved to £750. I sensed hesitation. I nodded to the telephonist. "£800 from upstairs—£850—£900 from upstairs—£950—£1,000 from upstairs." I found I was calm; the nods came easily; the price mounted, in units of £100, with lightning speed to £2,000 "from upstairs." I drew consolation from the fact that mine were the bids for £1,000 and £2,000—that gave me, I felt, a certain psychological advantage.

"£2,300—£2,500 from upstairs—£2,800—£3,000 from upstairs—£3,300—£3,500 from upstairs—£3,800—£4,000 from upstairs." The quickening price gave the sense that the tempo of the bidding itself had accelerated. My nods were now but the tics of a somnambulist.

"£4,500 from upstairs." My bid.

"£5,000," came the even voice of the auctioneer. My adversary below had eschewed the intermediary bid of £4,800. A tic from me to

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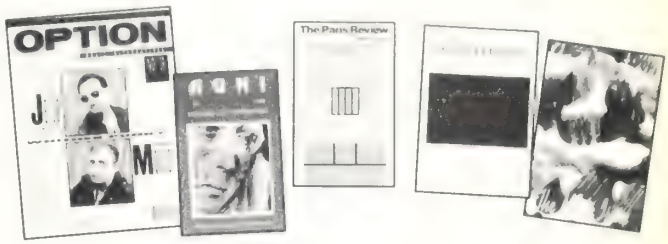
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the telephonist. "£5,500 from upstairs." We were into units of £500 now—this was madness, I thought: upper estimate—£150; current price—£5,500.

"£6,000, I'm bid," said the auctioneer. I lurched on. "£6,500 from upstairs."

"£7,000."

"£7,500 from upstairs." There was a pause. "I'm bid £7,500 from upstairs." The auctioneer repeated my bid. "£7,500 from upstairs. For the last time, a bid of £7,500 from the gentleman upstairs...£8,000."

I was stunned. The man from downstairs had gone on—he'd outbid me. The spell broke. I turned my face away from the telephonist. I was through. The auctioneer performed his customary litany of the successful offer and brought the hammer down. I was out. I was crushed, sensitive to nothing.

In a matter of moments, it seemed, Lot 94 was upon us. I had been deaf to everything since Lot 80. Surely Lot 92 had been the tie? I couldn't have missed the tie! Anxiously, I consulted the catalogue—no, Lot 98 was the tie. Pull yourself together.

As has been revealed, I bought that short, thin, black tie with a provenance. I paid £700 for it, twice the upper estimate. Cheap, I thought. I'd been pretty smart.

I registered my name with Sotheby's accounts office and wrote out the check for £780.50. I could pick up the tie after the Christmas holidays, when presumably the check would have cleared.

At no great pace, my mind a blank, I walked home. The blustery rain had turned to a gray, cold snow, but I felt heated, and opened my overcoat and jacket. It was later than I thought—nearly 2:30 P.M. Where had the time gone? Everything had seemed to go so quickly. What was I going to say to Yoko? I had failed her catastrophically. I felt very tired. Think about it later, I told myself. Have a sleep first.

Sam came on the line when I called New York that evening. "Hey, Gillon, how are you, how did it go? We're longing to hear."

"A day of mixed fortunes," I started lamely. "I missed the records, but I pushed the price up a bit." A lie. "And I got the tie."

"But what about the suit, the performance suit? Did you get the suit?"

"No, I did not get the suit."

"Why not? How come you missed the performance suit?"

"Look, Sam," I said. "I think I had better talk to Yoko."

"Sure," he said, and I could hear him preparing her for the news. "He missed the suit, but he got the tie, and I think he missed the records."

"Hello, Gillon." It was Yoko. "What about the medallion? Did you get the medallion? I know you got the tie, but did you get the medallion?"

"No, Yoko, I missed the medallion. In truth, when it came to the medallion, I lost my nerve."

"You lost your nerve? I wanted the medallion back."

"Yes, I know you did, but I just did not feel up to capping the other guy's bid. I cracked."

"What do you mean, you cracked? What did the other guy bid? How much did he pay?"

"£8,000."

"What did you say?" She did not wait for a reply. "£8,000 for the medallion? Did you say £8,000?"

"Yes, £8,000. I realize I should have kept going, but—"

"Jesus, Gillon!" she interrupted. "You're fantastic, fantastic. You're a genius. You're unbelievable. £8,000 for the medallion. You got the other guy to pay £8,000 for the medallion. Why," she purred, "we've got hundreds of medallions like that."

What else to say? I recounted the events of the day in detail. It was a long and excited conversation, in which Sam joined with enthusiasm. When it was over, I poured myself a very large glass of whiskey. In due course, I took delivery of the short, thin, black tie with a provenance and sent it to Yoko, and she paid for it promptly.

Ah, and the check I wrote to Customs and Excise for £38.24 on January 27, 1982? That was by way of import duty on a package, Christmas-wrapped, I received that morning from Tiffany's in New York. There was no indication of the sender. "No," the mailman said, "you can't open the package without paying the duty. Cash—£38.24." I persuaded him to accept a check.

I studied the package. The green customs slip gave a weight (2.5 kgs) and a value ($250). I removed the artful protective coverings. There came into view a crystal box—not a ball—almost cubic in form, some five inches high. Engraved on the underside of the heavy, detachable lid, making them visible through the glass from above, were (and remain) these letters:

SEASON OF GLASS
XMAS 1981
Y.O.L.

Yoko Ono Lennon, of course—certificated (in a way). ■

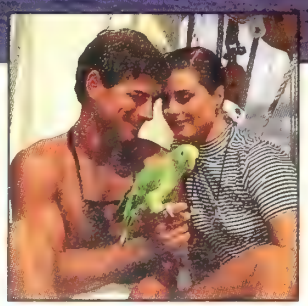
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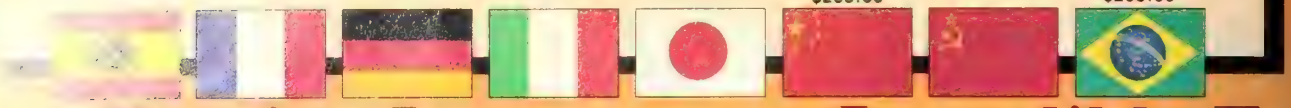
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VICTIMS, ALL?

Recovery, co-dependency, and the art of blaming somebody else

By David Rieff

Imagine a country in which millions of apparently successful people nonetheless have come to believe fervently that they are really lost souls—a country where countless adults allude matter-of-factly to their "inner children," who, they say, lie wounded and in desperate need of relief within the wreckage of their grown-up selves. Imagine the celebrities and opinion-makers among these people talking nightly on TV and weekly in the magazines not about their triumphs but about their victimization, not about their power and fame but about their addictions and childhood persecutions.

Imagine that this belief in abused "inner children" dragging down grown-up men and women has become so widespread as to exert considerable influence over the policies of such supposedly practical bodies as corporations, public hospitals, and boards of education—which, in turn, have taken to acting as if the greatest threat facing their various constituencies is a nexus of addictions and other self-destructive "behaviors," ranging from alcoholism and drug addiction to the more nebulous, if satisfyingly all-encompassing, category of "co-dependency," a term meaning, in essence, any reliance for one's sense of self on the opinion of someone else, someone more often than not plagued by his or her own addiction. One would be imagining a place, then, where nearly *everyone* is identified—is identifying himself or herself—as some sort of psychological cripple.

In this country, it is taken for granted that no blame for these addictions or dependencies can be assigned to those who exhibit them. Terms such as "character," "weakness," and "individual responsibility" are no longer deemed appropriate. Those who drink too much, take drugs, or destroy themselves (and their co-dependents) in other ways suffer either from a disease (like alcoholism) or from difficulties that are the direct, ineluctable result of the faulty upbringing to which they had been subjected as children.

A desperate creed, and yet this country is not—as, upon hearing it, an outsider might have had reason to suppose—on anything approaching its last legs. It has neither been bombed by fighter aircraft so technologically advanced as to be undetectable to its air defenses nor has its morale been unhinged by the rigors of prolonged triple-digit inflation, an austerity program imposed by the World Bank, the emigration of its skilled professionals, or inter-communal savagery. To the contrary, here is a country that, although scarcely without its difficulties, remains one of the richest countries on earth, indeed one of the richest places the world has ever known.

There is even a good argument to be made that the most salient thing about this country is not its apprehension of decline but, rather, how many people from all over the less-favored reaches of the globe seem willing to risk anything to pull up stakes and immigrate

David Rieff's Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World *has just been published by Simon & Schuster.*

here—and, having arrived, to fill with reasonably good grace all those dirty, humiliating, low-paying jobs that native-born workers have grown unwilling to perform.

In any event, those drawn to the idea of their wounded "inner child" are doing pretty well. Many have life stories that hew to what has long been the country's favorite narrative about itself: rags to riches. But now there has developed a new narrative: from addiction, through discovery of the "inner child," to recovery. In this country, this is the story men and women are increasingly telling themselves and one another. The country is the United States of America, circa 1991.

Most public-minded Americans would agree that there is a crucial debate going on just now, the resolution of which will have a deep impact on the character of our society. I am referring to the debate over "political correctness." President Bush, perhaps because he has always had a keen eye for inflammatory domestic symbols, has joined the chorus of voices that have dubbed the "P.C./multiculturalism" debate the most significant domestic argument about ideas in decades. At the same time, like the professors and pundits on both sides of the issue, he has been silent about the meaning of that much larger and, in terms of money and mass appeal, more influential enthusiasm that is usually referred to as the twelve-step, or recovery, movement.

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS SHARE A NEW PERSONAL NARRATIVE, ONE THAT LEADS FROM ADDICTION, TO DISCOVERY OF THE "INNER CHILD," ON TO RECOVERY

This is not to underestimate the importance of political correctness. Certainly, on university campuses, however vociferously and disingenuously the militants themselves continue to deny it, the teaching of the humanities has largely been hijacked, replaced by the factitious cant of deconstructionism and Third World apologetics, or, as its proponents, with their flawlessly tin ears, prefer to call it these days, "postcoloniality." Yet the fact remains that for every literature department that has been taken over by one or another of the vying ethnic and intellectual particularisms that pass for thinking in the contemporary academy, there are likely to be at least two new books preaching the message of recovery edging their way onto the national bestseller lists, not to mention the innumerable twelve-step chapters being formed every month in cities and suburbs all over the country.

Nevertheless, for intelligent Americans with no direct experience of these groups, the recovery movement is news from the fringe, trivial and evanescent. And it is a safe bet that books bearing such titles as *Healing the Child Within; Lost in the Shuffle: The Co-dependent Reality; The Road Less Traveled; Children of Trauma: Rediscovering Your Discarded Self;* and *Choice-Making for Co-dependents, Adult Children and Spirituality Seekers* will never be held up by some Republican officeholder caught in a tight race against a liberal challenger the way the works of leading radical multiculturalists are likely to be during the 1992 campaign. Nor are authors like John Bradshaw, Robert Subby, Scott Peck, Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse, or Ann Denis likely to find themselves excoriated as threats to Western civilization.

On the face of things, however, it is by no means immediately obvious why this should be so. Indeed, the claims that the recovery movement routinely makes for itself seem far more radical and infinitely more destabilizing of "establishment" values than even the most picturesque pronouncements of the campus radicals. When, for example, John Bradshaw, one of the recovery movement's leading figures, insists that "soul-murder is the basic problem in the world today," and then goes on to assert that everything about the way people live in modern America—not their life-style so much as their "death style," as Bradshaw puts it—confirms its essentially pathological character, he is going a great deal further than those who content themselves with demonstrating for the transformation of university humanities curricula.

Even when it comes to those assumptions that the recovery movement shares with radical multiculturalism, it is almost invariably within the context of recovery that they are presented in their most extreme form. Both movements deny the value of any important distinction between the personal and the political; but where the multiculturalists, however much their politics too may be based on feelings, at least try to hold on to certain political categories, the recovery people are interested only in their subjective selves. When *they* say the personal is the political they really mean it.

That the recovery psychotherapists are more radical than the academic multiculturalists becomes most clear when one examines the politics of victimhood, a centerpiece of both movements. In P.C. circles, this idea is inherently self-limiting in the sense that if the concept of oppression is to make any kind of sense, the situation of the various groups of victims—be they blacks, Hispanics, women, or gays—must be opposed to that of an oppressor



group—these days, straight white males. Proponents of recovery do not think in group terms. They claim that virtually everyone in the country is, in some essential sense, a victim—a victim, mostly, of abusive parents. Moreover, the recovery advocates say they have the statistics to back up this sweeping assertion. "What we're hearing from experts," John Bradshaw confidently told an interviewer not long ago, "is that approximately 96 percent of the families in this country are dysfunctional to one degree or another."

Small wonder, then, that for the recovery movement only a complete transformation of American society will do. Unlike the demands made by even the most extreme multiculturalists, which mostly boil down, for all the apocalyptic verbiage in which they come wrapped, to calls for various sorts of linguistic affirmative action, the goals of the recovery movement appear to be authentically millennial. Even the gravest of the specific ills the movement wants to remedy—the physiological and psychological addictions, as well as what, more broadly, recovery writers often characterize as "chronic inner pain"—are no more than symptoms of the larger spiritual crisis, and their redress is only the first step toward some larger spiritual awakening. As Bradshaw has put it, "I believe there are moments of great readiness in collective human consciousness...I think if we were to use a new Jungian archetype to characterize our time it would be the wounded child...and so if we change parent-child relationships, we can change history."

It is, perhaps, the use of this sort of pop-psychological language that has led American intellectuals and academics to underestimate the recovery movement. There is nothing new about recovery except the packaging, they tend to say, insisting that the search for "inner children" and such are only the latest in that long series of enthusiasms for self-improvement to which Americans have been drawn

Illustrations by Anthony Russo

since at least the middle of the nineteenth century. They admit that Bradshaw's books sell millions of copies but go on to remind you that neither the turn-of-the-century French psychotherapist Emile Coué nor Aimee Semple McPherson, whose revivals attracted thousands in the 1920s, did too badly themselves.

There is no denying that the "self-help" ethos is anything but new. Indeed, few Americans, no matter how European they may fancy themselves to be, live untouched by the conviction that they can change almost anything about themselves if they really want to do so. For Americans, self-creation has from the beginning been the essential act. The great American stories, from James Fenimore Cooper to Philip Roth, are about busting free, finding some way of shucking off the bonds of family and tradition, not so much with the purpose of winning the freedom to *be* oneself as out of the conviction that only the act of lighting out for the territories ensures that one will ever *become* oneself.

This old myth of the frontier is part of the story, of course. If spiritual quests have always been described as journeys, rarely has the spatial element had such resonance as in the American version. When the recovery writer Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse calls one of her books *Learning to Love Yourself: Finding Your Self-worth*, the echoes of the California state motto, born of the Gold Rush—Eureka ("I Have Found It")—are still audible. But even the noise of those spiritual covered wagons is, in the end, less compelling than another entrenched American idea, that of "know-how." The point of all these self-help books—of the entire recovery movement—is to give someone interested the *means* to recover. The very phrase "twelve-step program" is telling enough, as is the frequency with which a successful recovery book is soon accompanied by a "workbook" of some kind. Thus, John Bradshaw writes a book on the "inner child," but just down the shelf from it in most bookstores is Cathryn L. Taylor's *Inner Child Workbook: What to Do With Your Past When It Just Won't Go Away*. Sometimes, the same author produces both works. Melody Beattie's *Codependent No More* sold almost 2 million copies when it appeared in 1987. Three years later, Ms. Beattie was back on the bestseller list with *Codependents' Guide to the Twelve Steps*.

It seems that, given the proper tools, success is all but a sure thing. The recovery gurus may occasionally pause to insist that "working a program," to use the argot of the movement, can be a grueling business. But, for the most part, the tone is relentlessly upbeat. In the section of his book *Lost in the Shuffle* called "Recovery Hints and Reminders," Robert Subby writes of the year or two he expects it will take an addict to kick his or her habit. "These will not be years spent in drudgery and self-denial, but they will be years filled with learning a new way of life, building healthy relationships and laying the foundation for self-actualization." The tone is so artisanal that one wonders how Dr. Subby resisted the urge to just come out and say *pouring* the foundation. But when the promise is self-transformation, getting off dope or booze, no matter how essential, must indeed come to seem like little more than a kind of karmic renovation project.

And it is striking to what degree the American embrace of the how-to and the American apprehension of the psychological can be reconciled within the context of the idea of recovery. Alienated we may be but, whether it's on the floor of the health club or in one of John Bradshaw's co-dependency workshops where people pay hundreds of dollars a day to interact with their "inner children," often represented by toy animals they hold in their hands—frogs, usually, or teddy bears—it's all in the know-how.

The direct antecedent of all the twelve-step groups is not hard to identify. As almost every recovery writer makes clear, the movement derives its method and its inspiration from Alcoholics Anonymous. Many recovery books begin with impassioned accounts of their authors' alcoholism and their eventual discovery of the twelve steps through which they found a way out of their misery at a moment when they were convinced that all was lost. To understand how addiction and recovery have become our central metaphors—addicted to cocaine, the wrong kind of men, TV, gas guzzlers; recovering from too much sex, too little leisure, welfare dependency, the Vietnam syndrome—one first needs to look at AA.

Certainly it would be difficult, in any event, to overstate the influence that AA has exerted over mainstream American life since its formation in the 1930s, the outgrowth of a chance encounter in Akron, Ohio—every AA member learns this story; it is the organization's Genesis—between Bill Wilson, a stockbroker from New York City who had recently stopped drinking but was desperately afraid that he was on the verge of taking it up again, and the alcoholic Akron physician Bob Smith, who lives on in AA lore as Doctor Bob, a man who had tried everything but had never succeeded in remaining sober for very long. Not only has the so-called Big Book of the organization sold millions of copies since its first edition was published in 1939 but the millions of members

ho have belonged to AA over the decades ave been followed by millions more who ave been to at least one AA meeting some- me in their lives.

In retrospect, AA at its founding seemed ke one of the responses offered by a white, rotestant, small-town America despondent ver the failure of Prohibition. Passed in 1919, ie Volstead Act was ignominiously repealed 1933, and with its passing went any serious ope of legally mandated temperance. Of ourse, AA was no more a conscious expres- on of these changed circumstances than the rning inward that art historians discern in iedermeier furniture was a thought-out sponse to the failure of political liberalism in entral Europe in the early nineteenth centu- . That said, like Biedermeier, AA can be rtly understood as such a turning inward. stead of political action, AA followed its iritual progenitor, the early-twentieth-centu- Oxford Group, in preaching a species of per- nalized moral rearmament. Individual AA embers would accomplish what political tion had failed to: They'd do away with ooze. In the process, a "social problem" was ansformed into a "disease" over which alco- olics insisted they had no control.

It is interesting that so many of the recovery dvocates speak of their own political involve- ent during the 1960s. Indeed, some write of at period so nostalgically that it is hard not feel they are looking for their "inner ecade" as much as their "inner children." or me," writes Lucia Capacchione, author of *ecovery of Your Inner Child*, "the sixties were out marriage, family, and artistic achieve- ent. On the larger level they were also about uman rights, and I helped fight Johnson's ar on Poverty as a Head Start director. By ie decade's end, the Women's Movement was lly launched. Like many of my sisters, I was ggling a number of roles, i.e., wife, mother, tist, and educator. Then, one day, the bot- m dropped out as the seventies began..."

To the followers of recovery, the lesson of eir activism during the Sixties is that those olitical involvements were either, as Brad- aw once put it, "not genuine...a mood- tering trip"—in other words, yet another rm of co-dependency, this time on revolu- on—or else simply premature. Most would ngrily deny that their absorption in what ey sometimes call "ego work" represents any dication of social responsibility. "You can't to work in the social order unless you've ealed the wound (of your inner child)," Brad- aw has said.

Of course, many of these ideas were com- onplace in the Sixties as well. What else, when all is said and done, is all this talk in recovery circles about the primacy of the emotional over the rational, the instinctual over the repressed, and the spontaneous over the deliberate, if not a New Age gloss on the wilder assertions of a Wilhelm Reich or an R. D. Laing—the transliteration into Middle American terms of that catchphrase of May '68, "the imagination to power"? But whereas, in the now much-maligned Sixties, there was always at least a tension between the impulse to heal oneself and the impulse to heal the world, the recovery movement is in no doubt as to which choice is the right one. In recovery, one returns not to first principles but to the "inner child," the most private self. In this, recovery is fully the product less of the decade during which many of its adherents were young than of the Reaganite Eighties. When John Bradshaw replies to a question from an interviewer about how he sees the obligations adults owe their aging parents by declaring flatly that "we didn't come into this world to take care of Mom and Dad," he is, wittingly or not, recapitulating the Reagan-Bush approach when confronted by the problems of the frail and vulnerable in American society. The message, whether psychological or political, is that there are no civic, no social obligations, only private ones.

THE RECOVERY MOVEMENT'S MESSAGE, LIKE THE REAGAN-BUSH MESSAGE, IS THAT THERE ARE NO CIVIC, NO SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS, ONLY PRIVATE ONES

It will be obvious that Bradshaw is not a man to shrink from extremes. For him, not only are the personal and the political one and the same but so are the historical and the psychological. Borrowing liberally from the work of the Swiss child psychoanalyst Alice Miller, he argues that Nazism was the direct result of Hitler's having been abused as a child. Hitler, too, it would seem, was a victim. "Hitler," Bradshaw writes, "was re-enacting his own childhood, using millions of innocent Jews as his scapegoats." Small wonder, then, that Bradshaw and those who accept his arguments believe that recovery work is far more important than any more conventional social activism. As Bradshaw puts it, "Hitler and black [sic] Nazism are a cruel caricature of what can happen in modern Western society if we do not stop promoting and proliferating family rules that kill the souls of human beings."

More than anything else, it is this bleak, totalizing view of the world that distinguishes the message of most recovery books from that

contained in the other self-help volumes with which they share space on bookstore shelves and bestseller lists. The message is not Coué's "every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better," or Norman Vincent Peale's "power of positive thinking," or even Eric Berne's rather more tentative "I'm okay, you're okay." These authors offered little direct criticism of society in those books. Contrast their messages with John Bradshaw's unyielding assertion that "our family life is killing the souls of human beings" and his recommendation that since "most families are dysfunctional because our rules for normalcy are dysfunctional.... The important issue is to find out what species of flawed relating your family specialized in. Once you know what happened to you, you can do something about it."



And the one thing that all the recovery writers insist upon is that, whether an individual remembers it or not, *something did happen*. According to Dr. Charles Whitfield, one of the most successful recovery writers, only between 5 and 20 percent of Americans grew up "with a healthy amount and quality of love, guidance and other nurturing...." The rest—and, unsurprisingly, most recovery writers favor Dr. Whitfield's lower figure for those raised in healthy homes—did not receive anywhere near enough of the aforementioned psychic nutrients to successfully "form consistently healthy relationships, and to feel good about themselves and what they do." If the result is not a substance addiction like drink or drugs it is likely to be a "process" addiction taking the form of either too much interest in some activity or too much reliance on some other person or thing for an individual's sense of identity—the dreaded co-dependency.

In their book *Adult Children: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families*, John and Linda Friel provide a list of recovery groups—an incomplete list, they advise—that maps (or begins to) the contours of contemporary American addiction and victimhood. Beginning with AA, the Friels go on to note Al-Anon (the organization founded as a sort of ladies' auxiliary to AA, in the period when it was all male, to help the wives—later, more ecumenically, any loved one—of alcoholics), Alateen, Al-Atot, Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Bulimics/Anorexics Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, Sex Addicts Anonymous (the recovery movement is full of mysteriously fine distinctions), Adult Children Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Gamblers Anonymous, Spenders Anonymous, Smokers Anonymous, Debtors Anonymous, Fundamentalists Anonymous, Parents Anonymous, Child Abusers Anonymous, Workaholics Anonymous, Shoplifters Anonymous, Pills Anonymous, and Emotions Anonymous.

Whew! And, of course, such a list is infinitely expandable. For if there is really not all that much difference between working too hard and abusing your children (and the Friels' decision to place them side by side suggests that, in the recovery context, there really isn't), then any conduct that can be engaged in enthusiastically, never mind compulsively—from stamp collecting to the missionary position—would be one around which a recovery group could presumably be organized.

And new categories are, indeed, cropping up all the time. The biggest growth sector seems to have been in the co-dependency area. Cocaine Anonymous has begot Co-Anon; Narcotics Anonymous, Nar-Anon; Overeaters Anonymous, a slim O-Anon; and Sex Addicts Anonymous, Co-Sa. But there are plenty of wholly new addictions to recover from as well, including at their different ends of the tragedy scale Incest Survivors Anonymous, which is ghastly and self-explanatory, and Recovering Couples Anonymous, which is mysterious and turns out to mean a kind of group family therapy in which couples can figure out how to stay together. As Melody Beattie puts it in her *Codependents' Guide to the Twelve Steps*, the goal of RCA is "mutual interdependence,"

which, it seems, is not to be confused with co-dependency. The list goes on and on, and it is clear that the next decade will give rise to any number of new subsets of the victimized, the impaired, and the addicted.

It is interesting to chart just how a new group of victims is located. To take but one example, in 1983 Janet Geringer Woititz wrote a book called *Adult Children of Alcoholics*. It was turned down by most mainstream publishers and, at first, was sold almost entirely by mail order. Within four years, however, Woititz's book had not only gotten onto the *New York Times* bestseller list, eventually selling more than 2 million copies, but it had spawned a movement, the National Association for Children of Alcoholics, a magazine, *Changes*, and a whole new category within that larger grouping that Herbert Gravitz and Julie Bowden, authors of *Recovery: A Guide for Adult Children of Alcoholics*, call the 96 percent of the population who are "children of trauma." But after the magazine and the movement and the database, could the spin-off be far behind? Of course not. In 1988, Ann Smith, the director of a Pennsylvania family-services clinic, published *Grandchildren of Alcoholics: Another Generation of Co-dependency*. "My apologies," she writes, "for introducing another 'label.' I know of no other way to bring this group of people out of hiding and into recovery."

Here I must declare an interest. Being the adult grandchild of an alcoholic—one is not supposed to hide these facts in the land of the free and the home of the autobiography—I naturally scrutinized Ms. Smith's book with particular care. But while it is never safe to underestimate the power of repression, I must report that I just don't see it. I was surprised to learn that the first characteristic Ms. Smith identifies in people like me is a "distorted family image." This turns out to mean "seeing only the good in [one's family]." Now, this is not a trait associated either with my family or, I would submit, that of many other writers. Oh well. The second category is "self-blaming." It may be old-fashioned to say this, but would that it were so. The rest of Ms. Smith's list is scarcely more revealing. I had been "outed," it seemed, for no purpose. Indeed, I have been more shaken up by a trip to a Broadway fortune-teller.

Of course, it may be that I simply do not know which addiction or co-dependency I have. There are, after all, so many to choose from. This is presumably why so many of the recovery books on the market include endless questionnaires and checklists through which the reader can take a reading on his or her emotional situation. The categories are, to put it charitably, broadly phrased. In *Bradshaw On: The Family*, for example, the author offers a checklist for what he calls "adult children of dysfunctional families"; i.e., his readers, not to say the American people as a whole. "See if you identify yourself in several of the following traits," he writes. "If you do, it's likely that you are co-dependent and are carrying your family dysfunction." These traits turn out to include such harmless aspects of temperament as "inveterate" dreaming and keeping "secrets." There is even the fearsome trait "avoids depression through activity," which, particularly if one is prey to severe depression, hardly seems like such a bad idea.

Dr. Charles Whitfield's "Recovery Potential Survey" in his *Healing the Child Within* is, if anything, even more all-encompassing. Indeed, it is hard to see how, given the way Dr. Whitfield has defined childhood trauma, *any* reader could feel exempt. The questions in the survey range from relatively benign queries like "Do you seek approval and affirmation?" through the more ominous "Do you respond with anxiety to authority figures and angry people?" (here one wants to ask, With or without a firearm in their hands?) to the merely bathetic, as in that old self-help standby "Do you find it difficult to express your emotions?" And, of course, the whole thing is rigged. It turns out that in Dr. Whitfield's system of grading even one answer of "occasionally" (never mind "often" or "usually") means that the respondent stands in considerable need of having his or her inner child tended to. And just to make sure that those who have not admitted to any such feelings aren't let off the hook, Dr. Whitfield is quick to point out that if the reader answers "mostly 'Never,' you may not be aware of some of your feelings." Checkmate.

FOR RECOVERY GURUS TO INSIST THAT WE ARE ALL VICTIMS (MOSTLY OF BAD PARENTS) IS THE SAME THING AS ASSERTING THAT NO ONE IS A VICTIM

For people like Whitfield and the other recovery writers to insist that we are all victims is pretty much the same thing as asserting that no one is a victim. Either way, the civic voice is muffled, if not blotted out; it is up to you or to me, but not we. Of course, such an outbreak of self-pity among the affluent classes as recovery has spawned all but ensures that the real victims in American society—those who will never be affluent enough or have enough free time to work it out with their "inner children"—will not get

the attention that is the necessary first step to any improvement in *their* lives.

Meanwhile, resources as well as attention are lavished on "inner children." Bradshaw writes in *Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child* that he found he had to balance the demands of his new celebrity with his obligations to his "inner child" and so "chose some things that my inner child likes. For the last few years, we always fly first class."

The recovery writers insist that nearly everyone in the United States has been the victim of some instance of child abuse. One would think that if a term like "child abuse" is to have any real meaning, it must be limited to some variant of sexual violation or battery. The recovery movement would have it otherwise. They talk of mental abuse, of parents abusing their children by "invalidating their experiences," even of abusers who thwart "the child's spirituality," to quote Charles Whitfield. So much for life in its full, honest imperfection.

In recovery workshops, as well as at home in the living room recovery workbooks opened, people are encouraged to try to get in touch with that "inner child" and discern, through a dialogue with it, whether he or she was abused: "Memory work," it is called. One might reasonably ask if someone moved to do such memory work were not, in some way, predisposed to uncover evidence of abuse—some explanation of their addiction or emotional unhappiness. But this is not a question to be entertained. Steven Farmer writes in his book *Adult Children of Abusive Parents*, "No matter how abuse is defined or what other people think, you are the ultimate judge: If you think you were abused, you were. If you're not sure, you probably were."

ONE MEASURE OF OUR ECONOMIC SUCCESS IS THAT SO MANY ADULTS CAN SPEND THEIR TIME SPECULATING AS TO WHETHER THEIR PARENTS BEHAVED WELL

What matters is the story that you arrive at. Thus, to imagine is to make it so, or, as the title of an anthology of postwar American women writers would have it, "We are the stories we tell." Bradshaw's story is, as he says in *Homecoming*, that we are "divine infants in exile," a nation of E.T.'s desperate to come home. And it seems that increasing numbers of Americans are beginning to agree with him.

But *are* we the stories we tell? During the period that I was reading little but recovery books, I kept remembering an encounter I had seen once on television between reporters and the grieving father of one of the passengers killed when Sikh terrorists blew up an Air India flight over the Irish Sea in 1985. The weeping father had been shown coming out of the makeshift morgue that the Irish police had set up in a small coastal village, and no sooner had he done so than he was surrounded by the hacks who bombarded him with questions. "What are you going to do?" one called out. To which, with astonishing dignity, the man replied simply, "Do? What do you expect me to do in this dirty world?"

The point that he was trying to make through his sobs was precisely the one that the recovery movement is most anxious to deny. Life may be whatever story you invent in a Bradshaw seminar, but only very affluent, very cut-off people could persuade themselves, at least once they have "returned home," that this is really the way things are. A quick way of seeing just how specific the recovery idea is to prosperous Americans in the late twentieth century is to think how preposterous it would seem not only to a man whose daughter had just been killed by a terrorist bomb, or someone who was hungry, but to someone, anyone, in Croatia, the Soviet Union, or South Africa. It is a safe bet that they are more worried about what will befall their real children than what has befallen their inner children. It is a measure of the continued economic success of the United States that so many of its citizens could be so buffered from the real harshness of the world that they can spend their time anatomizing the state of their own feelings and speculating, often deep into middle age, about whether or not their parents always behaved as well as they should have.

In most of the world, though, people's thoughts are elsewhere. Beyond our innocent shores, it is understood that the past is not always knowable and never recuperable, that there is sometimes nothing to be done, and that reality conforms neither to our desires nor to our schemes, psychic or material. There is chance, and fate, and tragedy.

Of course, it is true that there is a group within the population who often do not know this or believe it. We call them children, and while we may envy them their ignorance, and their belief in the potency of their own wishes, we know that they are under a false impression. We also know, or should, that however much we may feel nostalgia for our childhood, there is no going back, no reprieve from adulthood, which is to say from consciousness. That is the splendor and misery of being an adult, a condition from which we should not want to and, more to the point, cannot recover. ■

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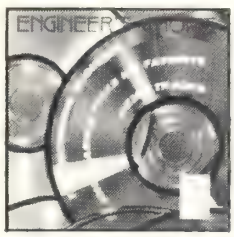
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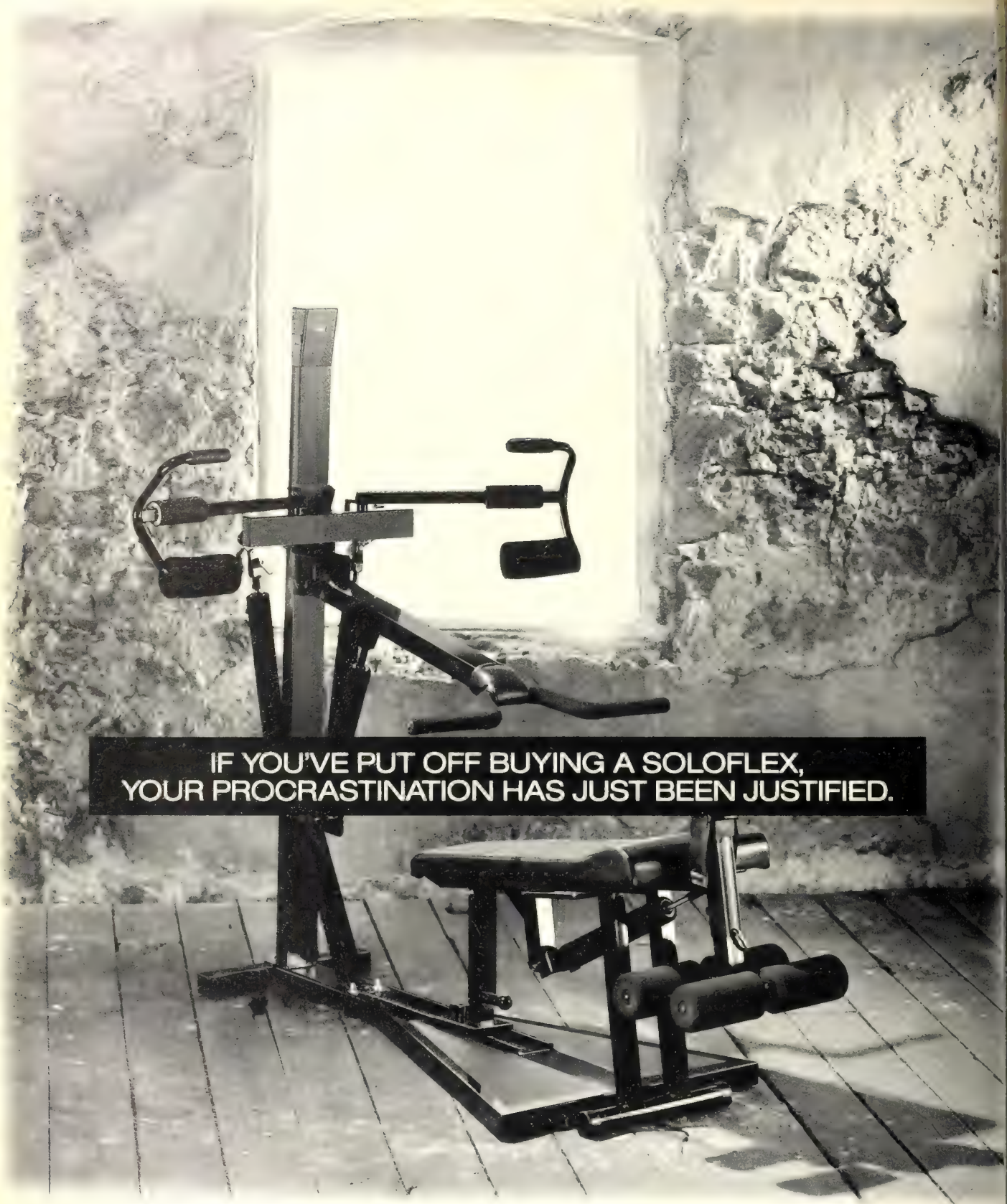
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TRIMAX

UNLAWFUL, UNELECTED, AND UNCHECKED

How the CIA subverts the government at home

By Christopher Hitchens

On the first day of August this year, in Room 419 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, there was a hearing that disclosed little to the eye but a good deal to the skeptical mind. The setup looked unpromising enough. With the exception of vast, choreographed numbers like the Iran-Contra waltz of the summer of '87, congressional hearings are deliberately organized to militate against drama, and this particular hearing was no exception. Experts were on hand to speak in tones pitched to guarantee boredom. Committee members, typically half-prepared and distracted, would ensure monotony and torpor. The Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was taking evidence on the murky workings of an international bank—no big deal in our time.

But the bank in question this day was the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, and the testimony, as it unfolded, had less to do, really, with the financial workings of BCCI than with the intestinal workings of the government of the United States. Ranged in various attitudes of piety and relaxation were Senators Jesse Helms (R., N.C.), James Jeffords (R., Vt.), Claiborne Pell (D., R.I.), Paul Simon (D., Ill.), Alan Cranston (D., Calif., and a nice touch for an investigation of a bank), and John Kerry (D., Mass.), the subcommittee chairman. The two witnesses were Jack Blum, a former investigator for the subcommittee, and William von Rabb, U.S. Customs commissioner under Presidents Reagan and (until August 1989) Bush, and dull their declarations were not. As Blum and von Rabb got deeper and deeper into their testimony, reporters began to catch one another's eye; in the seats reserved for the public, quiet gave way to murmurs and even a few whistles of astonishment. I was a bit taken aback myself by the Q's and especially the A's:

Did the Federal Reserve possess a list of names of prominent Washingtonians who had taken kickbacks from BCCI? *Yes, it did.*

Had BCCI helped certain "outlaw" states acquire American nuclear technology? *Yes, it had.*

Had payments been made through BCCI to drug runners, gun smugglers, death-squad leaders? *You bet.*

Had the Treasury Department known about BCCI? *Sure.*

What about Justice? (The department, not the concept—we're talking real world here.) *They knew what was up and seemed most concerned that no others would.*

Interesting. But in a way even more interesting (at least to the skeptical mind) than this long scroll of indictments was where the scroll suddenly screeched to a halt. Treasury, Justice...what about the Central Intelligence Agency? I happened to know that the CIA had been politely invited to send someone to appear before the subcommittee. Its members had recently learned from investigators that the agency had stashed money in a number of BCCI accounts to use for covert operations in a number of countries. Senator Kerry's subcommittee—at any rate, Senator Kerry—wanted some answers.

I actually have in my possession a letter from Senator Kerry—whose work on the con-

Christopher Hitchens is the Washington editor of Harper's Magazine.

connection between narcotics and the Nicaraguan Contras was so efficiently interred three years ago to Judge William H. Webster, director of Central Intelligence. The letter was sent on May 14, 1991, weeks before regulators in several countries shut down BCCI and its worldwide $20 billion criminal operation. In the letter, Webster is asked to furnish a copy of a seven- to ten-page memorandum about BCCI written in 1988 by the deputy director of the CIA, Robert Gates, and to provide as well a "detailed explanation" of the nature and extent of the agency's use of the bank.

Kerry got no reply of any kind from Webster. Kerry *was* told by the agency that no CIA man would appear before his subcommittee unless the hearing was closed. The open hearing did produce an account of how the CIA knew but failed to inform the Federal Reserve that BCCI illegally controlled First American Bankshares Inc., the Washington-based holding company chaired by Clark Clifford; and Jack Blum did place in evidence a deposition from former Contra bagman Adolfo Calero. (Very interesting, the latter—but its contents were not disclosed.) By the end of the day, however, no committee member had formulated a sentence placing in relation the terms BCCI and CIA. This day, as on all too many days since its modest inception in 1947, the CIA was the ghost in the machine. The ostensible processes of open, representative government were not to—and dutifully did not—reveal the agency's role or its reach.

THIS FALL THERE WILL BE MORE SORDID ACCOUNTS OF CIA OPERATIONS, TO BE SURE, BUT I DOUBT THERE WILL BE AN ACCOUNTING

There exists a provision in the Constitution requiring of all branches of government "that a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time." The CIA is exempted from this—hence its easy evasions with regard to BCCI. In truth, the CIA, citing national security, has managed to exempt itself from all manner of scrutiny, be it from the Congress, the press, or ordinary citizens.

The BCCI scandal; the hubristic nomination of Robert Gates to head the agency, despite his umbral connections to the illegal funding of the Contras; the ongoing investigation by special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh into the Iran-Contra affair, now burrowing further and further into the CIA thanks to the [illegible] of conscience and plea-bargains experienced by Alan Fiers, who headed the agency's Central America Task Force from 1984 to 1988; the trial of Manuel Noriega, the CIA's torture-condoning, coke-dealing "asset"; the mainstream attention given (finally) this past summer to allegations that the Reagan campaign team, led by spookmeister William Casey, sought to delay the release of the hostages held in Iran until after the 1980 election: The CIA, its awful role and lawless reach, is everywhere apparent in Washington just now. Everywhere, and nowhere: This fall there will be more sordid accounts of CIA operations and actions, to be sure, but I doubt there will be an accounting. It would seem to be no one's issue that the laws and institutions of government—that American democracy itself—have been, as they might say inside the agency, "coverted."

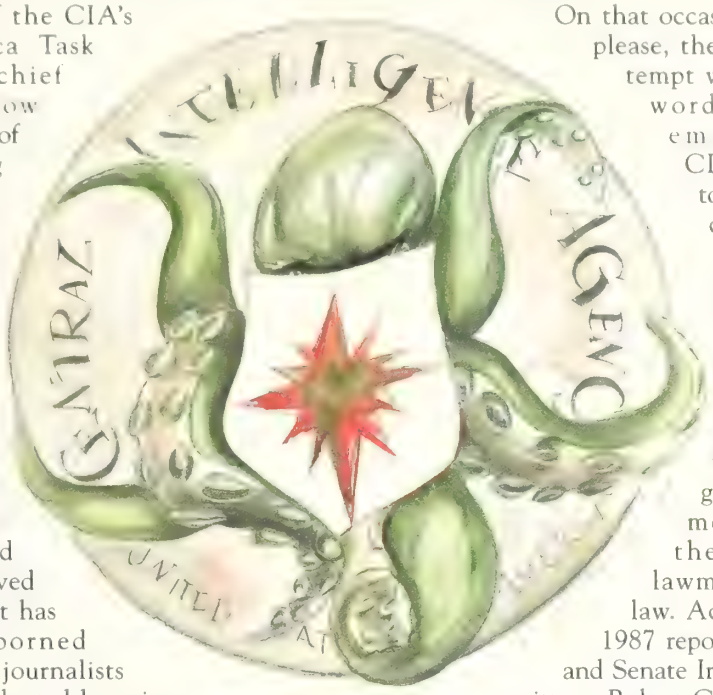
"Our real duty is to become the mind of America." Thus Hugh "Harlot" Montague, the pseudo-intellectual spy who is the eponymous center of Norman Mailer's new epic novel about the CIA. Such airs—in life as in fiction—the agency gives itself! The mind of America, yet! But dare we repress the suspicion that there is something all too truthful in this arrogation? Even something that—if we keep in mind how the American political class has delegated numberless dark corners of its "mind" to covert subcontractors—might explain the broadly felt sense of overwhelming political cynicism and disarray? Consider, if only briefly, the postwar role the CIA has played in bending the American mind.

I am going to leave aside the overseas memorials—the graveyards filled by the noisy Americans in and around Saigon; the torture chambers constructed and used in Iran by SAVAK; the jail cell that held Nelson Mandela, whose arrest the CIA played a part in; the statues of dictators propped up by the agency—that mark the CIA's collusion with the most degraded elements in Third World politics. Let us confine the study to America's own internal affairs—including that area of "police, subpoena, or law enforcement powers or internal security functions" that the CIA was, by its founding congressional charter, explicitly forbidden to touch.

Beginning at the beginning, we find the agency secretly finding homes and jobs in the U.S. for several hundred prominent Nazis and Nazi collaborators. Soon after begin the operational pacts with notorious American crime families. Drugs have had a special place in the CIA; it has, over the years, financed experiments with LSD and other hallucinogens and toxins on unwitting civilians, and worked in concert with pilots and middlemen who trafficked not only in information but in heroin and cocaine that

wound up on the American market.

As for that other American bogey, spendthrift government: The CIA may be mean but never lean. Its exact funding, naturally, is kept from us, and anyway the "intelligence community" is not only the agency but many agencies, which only means that the generally accepted estimate of the CIA's annual budget—no less than $3.5 billion, in support of 20,000 employees—is on the far side of conservative. In such a case, the smallest vignette may be quite instructive. In 1986, William Casey awarded a $20,000 bonus to Alan Fiers for his "exceptional management" of the CIA's Central America Task Force—Fiers's chief "task," as we now know, being that of circumventing congressional prohibitions on arming Contras and talking trade with hostage takers.



Above and beyond the drugs and the wasting of tax dollars is the matter of American democracy, and the CIA's unrelieved contempt for it. It has bought and suborned senior American journalists and editors, and planted knowing falsehoods in the American press. It has established itself, by means of "deniable" funds and foundations, in the belly of the American academy, although no doubt literature courses influenced by multiculturalism are infinitely more scandalous and threatening to the American way of life. Should I bring up the publishing houses the agency has subsidized to dispense disinformation? How it has further corrupted a political language—think of "asset," "destabilize," "terminate"—already weakened by sordid euphemism? (This is not so much the American mind as the American id: down, dirty, sniggering.) What about the tainted money from overseas—from despots, mostly, as if to sharpen the irony—that, thanks to the agency, has entered the electoral process?

The damage the CIA has done to American democracy is most evident, I think, when we look to Congress. The Senate and House have been routinely deceived by the agency and by foreign governments assisted by the agency—this is the dark heart of Iran-Contra. What is more, the pornography of tough-mindedness, covert action, and preparedness for "peace through strength" has had a predictably hypnotic effect on the legislative branch, turning it from legal watchdog to lapdog. As the agency's most famous counterespionage man, James Jesus Angleton, once peremptorily told an "executive session" of the Senate Committee on Intelligence: "It is inconceivable that a secret intelligence arm of the government has to comply with all the overt orders of the government."

On that occasion—and note, please, the educated contempt with which the word "overt" is employed—the CIA had refused to comply with a congressional call to destroy its supply of Castro-threatening shellfish poison. In recent years senior agency officials have grown somewhat more subtle in their disdain of lawmakers and the law. According to the 1987 report of the House and Senate Iran-Contra committees, Robert Gates testified, in answer to questions that involved the immediate space in front of his nose: "We [the agency] didn't want to know how the Contras were being funded...we actively discouraged people from telling us things. We did not pursue lines of questioning." In his response to a question about how he was advised in October 1986 by an understrapper, Charles Allen, that there might be an Iran-to-Contra "diversion"—bear in mind that this advising from Allen came a full month before the scandal broke—Gates testified that his "first reaction was to tell Mr. Allen that I didn't want to hear any more about it."

Lying? Yes, as it turned out. But in a sense what is more interesting, in an ominous way, is how Gates—how the agency, for it is true of it as well as him—claims the metaphysical power to negate knowledge, even cognition. This is intelligence work of a most peculiar sort. In the hands of the CIA, a well-known, widely reported, public fact—for example, Israel's early and

Illustration by Steve Brodner

role in clandestinely arming Iran with American weapons when there was a congressional ban on such—gets classified a "secret" and is never again mentioned by an elected official. (Israel, comically, went through the Iran-Contra hearings as "Country One.") Similarly, as with Gates and the diversion, a known phenomenon—profits from arms sales to Iran entering the Contras' coffers—becomes "unknown" because a CIA official puts his hands to his ears when knowledge of the phenomenon is about to be uttered in his presence. (The obvious question for Mr. Gates at his confirmation hearings: How did he *know* he didn't want to know any more about it?)

It must be said that over the long haul such conjury does require an audience of almost doltish credulity. This has been furnished time and again by the aptly named intelligence "oversight" committees on the Hill: juries of those not wishing to hear, nodding at witnesses not wishing to tell. In the mid-1970s there did flicker a moment when it was thought that perhaps the CIA should not be a law unto itself—I am thinking of the Church and Pike committees' work—but that moment was quickly extinguished, thanks in no small part to the work of then CIA director George Herbert Walker Bush. An outstanding example of current relations (that is to say, traditional relations) between oversight and the purportedly overseen can be discerned in the matter of the disclosure that Robert Gates, just days before the President nominated him to head the CIA, had been notified that he was a "subject" of Lawrence Walsh's ongoing Iran-Contra investigation. Questioned about this troubling development (troubling even after so much overlooking, one might still think), the White House said it was troubled not at all—that "through an intermediary" it had received "some assurance" from the special prosecutor that Gates was not an actual target of the investigation. And the intermediary? Why, Senator David Boren (D., Okla.), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee and the elected lawmaker most clearly responsible for overseeing, not facilitating.

THE "NEW" WHITE-COLLAR CIA HAS BEEN AROUND FOR YEARS, ITS COMPUTER NERDS AND THINK-TANK TYPES TABULATING CONCOCTED NUMBERS

If you had been at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, last March 4—in fact, you would not, by law, have been allowed to have [illegible]—you would have witnessed a celebra[illegible] of such facilitation, as Director Webster [illegible]ted Republican Congressman Henry [illegible] of Illinois and Democratic Congressman Anthony C. Beilenson of California with CIA Seal Medallions for their "sustained outstanding support to the agency." Both had served long and well (from the agency's standpoint) on the House Intelligence oversight committee, and Webster spoke of the "high privilege" it had been to work with them. Ah, checks and balances. Congressman Beilenson made note at the ceremony of how the CIA had "followed both the letter and the spirit of the law." Congressman Hyde—you might recall his role in making absolutely sure the Iran-Contra hearings self-destructed—contented himself with saying that service to the oversight committee had been "a rare adventure." I dare say.

In its attempt to salvage the Gates nomination this fall and to fend off those, like Senator Moynihan (D., N.Y.), who have begun wondering aloud whether the CIA should not be subject to a full re-evaluation, what with the war it was set up to fight—the Cold War—now over, the agency has gotten the word around town about a "new" CIA: no more plumbers, just computer nerds and specialists of the think-tank variety, white-collar types turning out economic forecasts and drawing up long-range forecasts. The problem with this "new" CIA is that it has been around for years. The tabulation of concocted figures and the drawing from these of fictitious conclusions have long been agency staples. The CIA's annual *Handbook of Economic Statistics* is a perfect example, and its 1989 edition makes for wonderful reading. My favorite number is the one putting the annual rate of growth in the U.S.S.R. during 1981–85 at 1.9 percent, significantly above the rate for those years in Western Europe. The CIA also cooked up the idea that the per capita GNP of East Germany was greater in the 1980s than that of West Germany—the agency's numbers are right there in the 1989 edition of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

To what end, this arithmetical fiction? Well, it wasn't intended to deceive the Russians or East Germans. They never toiled under the illusion that they were outstripping the West. The target here was the American lawmaker and, through him, the American taxpayer. The point was the maintenance of a national mood, one more deeply informed by fear. In such a climate, democracy might be overlooked here and there, and those in power might be given the chance to maintain it and exercise it in the shadows.

When the CIA predicted that the U.S.S.R. would possess *10,000* antiballistic missiles by 1970, it was doing little more than giving an

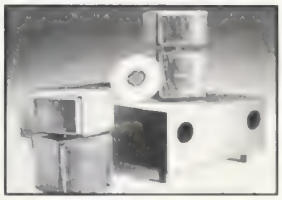
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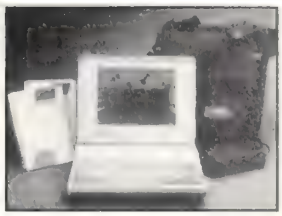
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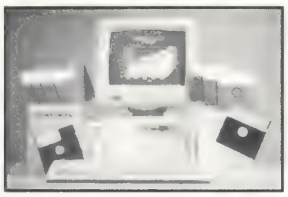
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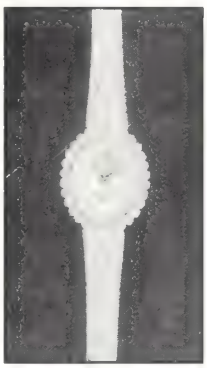
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...ise boost to the "contractor community," as I once heard it unsmilingly called. The Soviet T-72 tank, recently demonstrated to have extremely combustive properties on the plains of Mesopotamia, was invested with magically sinister capabilities by one CIA report after another. Ditto the Scud. This wasn't the War Brought Home that the anti–Vietnam War demonstrators chanted of. This was the War Bought at Home.

As for the agency's long-range forecasts, they have always been written ultimately with one thing in mind: assuring a continued and prominent foreign-policy–making role for the unelected government at Langley. With the Cold War in the past tense, this will not be easy: New enemies must be found and fast. Drug kingpins? Terrorists? If joining them no longer pays off, one might as well beat them.

It would seem that the agency is also looking to develop *economic* enemies, beginning with Japan. The Rochester Institute of Technology in upstate New York, under the presidency of M. Richard Rose, has evolved into a satellite station of the agency, and last year in Rochester there took place a CIA-sponsored seminar on the Japanese economy. Among the participants were Kent Harrington, director of the CIA's East Asia Department, and former National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane (nice to have *him* back). Col. Andrew Dougherty, a Rochester administrator, worked up a draft report based on the seminar, and I suspect it is something of a template for the "new" CIA.

THE DARK HISTORY OF THE UNELECTED GOVERNMENT AT LANGLEY MUST BE BROUGHT TO LIGHT IF THIS COUNTRY IS TO REGAIN FAITH IN WASHINGTON

We learn, for example, that the Japanese "are creatures of an ageless, amoral, manipulative, and controlling culture." They are poised to take advantage of Americans, whose natural "optimism" forever "creates a false sense of security and reduces the national will to act." (Sounds here as though Mr. Harrington cribbed a bit from the Fifties forecasts about the U.S.S.R.) In the not too distant future—the report is titled "Japan: 2000"—there will loom the threat of "an economic sneak attack, from which the United States may not recover."

No "new" CIA will be formulated from within the agency itself. Nor will pressure for such come from anywhere in the executive branch. Lest we forget, it was the CIA that molded the plastic figure of George Bush and laid the trail of calamities and cover-ups that helped him along the road to the presidency. Appointed to the directorship by Gerald Ford supposedly as a technocrat—instructive, that, in getting a grasp on nominee Gates—Bush proved staunchly otherwise, beginning right off at his confirmation hearings with one of the more stupendous Freudian syntactical blunders of our time: "I think we should tread very carefully on governments that are constitutionally elected." During his tenure at Langley, the agency set up serious shop in Angola and Jamaica, American journalists continued to be hired on the sly, and General Noriega was even more generously cultivated.

It was also Director Bush who used the agency to tighten the ratchet of Seventies anti-commie paranoia by appointing "Team B" to second-guess the annual intelligence estimates. "Team B," made up of Paul Nitze, Richard Pipes, Lt. Gen. Dan Graham, and others of similar stamp, is perhaps best remembered for its belief in the unfalsifiable superstition that Moscow sought and could obtain strategic superiority. Out of this smoke came the atmospherics of Reaganism.

Bush will do nothing to bring either *glasnost* or *perestroika* to Langley. And he can be counted on to prevent Congress from doing so. Witness his demanding and getting from the Hill in August a new, post–Iran-Contra Intelligence Authorization Act that, formalities aside, permits the CIA to continue its unchecked, covert ways. Which is not to say that some lonely congressional committee or two still should not make a thorough, concerted inquiry into the CIA a priority. Quite the contrary: There is here, as in the Soviet Union, an entire shadow history that must be brought to light if this country is ever again to regain even a modicum of faith in Washington. One need look back no further than the 1980s—the 1980 presidential election, possibly tainted by William Casey and company; the arms buildup, undertaken on the basis of CIA-confected data; the Contra war, fueled by the CIA against the will of Congress; the cover-up of the latter, smeared with agency fingerprints—to glimpse the breadth and depth of the shadow cast.

Can we take it? The wiseacres inside the Beltway say no, the people could not bear the grim news and do not wish to learn it. Credibility is said to be at stake. Well, yes it is. The full exposure of the shadow government operating out of Langley is a necessary condition for, as people like to say, "putting all this behind us" and "moving the country forward."

No candidate for the highest office in 1992 can be counted as genuine unless he or she announces that the elected government will be the only one. ■


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TO FIND THE EDGE

By Robert Stone



Browne called the boat *Nona* after a boat of his father's. His father had named that boat after the sloop Hilaire Belloc sailed in the Irish Sea. After *Nona*, his father had acquired a schooner of twenty-four feet and fearlessly christened it *Don Juan*. The original *Don Juan* was the schooner that failed Shelley in the Gulf of Spezia. Shelley's boat had been a hot dog, sheered for maximum speed. He and his friend had died running before the storm, billowing sails up, in imitation of the west wind. Browne's father, in his cups, could recite long bits of "Adonais." Browne himself supposed he knew more about Shelley's boat than about his prosody.

Just after sunrise, forty-eight hours and more than two hundred miles off the Ambrose Channel Lightship, Browne sat in *Nona*'s open cockpit and looked at the western horizon. Astern, the last fat white clouds of home were falling away. A northwest wind whistled in the slot, force five and steady. Months before, on the night he'd agreed to sail *Nona* in the round-the-world Eglative solo, he had gone straight to the Admiralty charts and begun to plot his way around the globe. But he was not inclined now, watching the morning's white horses roll by, to lay lines or chart courses.

In the last hours of daylight he dozed off and awakened to find himself on a sunlit ocean of sultry blue—the Gulf Stream. For such a long time, he thought, he had been promising himself unfamiliar skies. Leaning over the side, he dipped his hand in the quarter wave and felt it warm. The sensation made him smile.

At some level he felt involved in an escape. His impulse was simply to head out and put the land behind him. Beyond that, it made sense to keep on easting while the wind held and get across the Stream as quickly as possible. The first weather fax had carried nothing but sweet assurance; there were no tropical storms on the prowl and no threatening northers.

Browne had slept very little after clearing The Narrows. Propped up in the cockpit against a stack of foul-weather gear, he had drifted in and out of consciousness, fighting to outlast darkness. His radar alarm was set for a fifteen-mile radius. Through three nights in the coastal shipping lanes, he had stayed on deck, scanning the dark horizons. A few hours on the Gulf Stream's sky-bright waters inclined him to rest easy. In the afternoon, he went below, cleared the stacks of last-minute gear from his bunk, and stretched out.

When he went on deck again, the sun was low and the pastel water overlaid with a puritan October light. The wind was steady and he kept *Nona* eastward. In the last daylight, he checked the screws in the self-steering vane and eased the lines against chafing. According to his knot log, he had come 154 miles since the day before, a speed of close to seven knots.

For dinner he cooked a can of chicken broth and drank it from his usual coffee cup, a Navy mug in the Navy pattern. Anne had packed it for him in tissue with a blue ribbon. Inside was a note detailing the boat's stowage plan. He needed only to glance around the main cabin to realize how much of the stowage his wife had overseen. Tossing the homely red and white Campbell's soup can in the scraps gave him a momentary flash of incongruity. Home away from home.

On deck at dusk, he sipped his soup and listened to the accommodating wind. The loneliness he felt

Robert Stone is the author of A Hall of Mirrors, Dog Soldiers, A Flag for Sunrise, *and* Children of Light. *This story is excerpted from his forthcoming novel,* Bridge Reach, *to be published later this year by Ticknor & Fields.*

Illustration by Gwyn Stramler

ather surprised him. Except for Anne's presence, he thought of himself as a solitary. In his deepest recollections, it seemed to him, he was always alone.

Browne's only previous solo passage over blue water had been five days spent between Florida and Cape Fear. It was a passage he had trouble remembering. One time at sea blended into another when things went well, and that one had gone well enough. Some of the time, mainly at night, his mind had played tricks. It had been easy to get the wind in tune and start it singing. On the open sea, the eye tended to impose form on random patterns of wave and light. The same thing happened in deep woods. It happened to everyone.

A clear sky burned overhead, appropriate to the west wind. Altair shone radiant over the continent behind him, Betelgeuse and Orion over the farther ocean. It was a childish pleasure to have the stars to himself again. Before midnight, he went below.

He awoke to a sound that cheered him. The sun was high in the sky and Morse code was coming over the Icom transceiver, loud and clear at more than thirty words a second. As a midshipman, in the autumn before he was commissioned, Browne had spent some months at the Navy's radio school in Norfolk, Virginia. He had learned to type in radio school, and the typing of a letter still brought to his mind the ghostly echo of its Morse equivalent. It was early afternoon and he was hungry. Later, he decided, he would take a sighting.

He made himself a cheese omelet for breakfast and ate it with fried ham, and, as things did at sea, it tasted marvelous. When he had washed the dishes he went on deck.

The day was fine, the wind steady and the ocean still as blue. As a bonus, four gray bottlenose dolphins were leaping with *Nona*'s bow, as good an omen as could be.

At noon on November 20, Browne took a sun sighting and located himself northeast of the Cape Verde Islands. The fix did not conform well to his satellite reading. At the same time his compass was shifty, as though some countermagnetic force were in the air. The wind was moist and intermittent; he was riding the Canaries Current, making about two knots under the mainsail and a slack light drifter.

In midafternoon, he sighted an island off his starboard bow that was black but inlaid with a deep delicious green, a festive sight in the glare. A hill rose from it to a height he reckoned at 400 meters. Referring to the Admiralty sailing guide, he decided it was the island called Boa Vista. Later, a little boat painted in violent African colors went across his bow at a distance of a mile or so. Through binoculars he could make out a shirtless brown man with a red bandanna across his head standing behind the wheelhouse. The boat seemed top-heavy and tossed alarmingly in the mild sea. The name *Sao Martin da Porres* was stenciled across its stern.

At four o'clock, the marine operator broadcast a roll call of the entries. The stars of the race, the big boats, were already closing on Cape Agulhas. Browne's competition was spread westward over several hundred miles. Of the lot, only Preston Fowler was ahead of him, clearing the equatorial doldrums at latitude eleven south. When the broadcast ended, a weather fax arrived, announcing a tropical depression off the horn of Brazil.

Boa Vista passed out of sight before sunset. The moment the sun was down equatorial darkness closed around him, black on black under the cold stars. Worried about the current and the proximity of land, he stayed late on deck. His mind's eye refused to give up the image of the black and green island. Finally he played the game of refusing the image, trying to force it from his imagination. Eventually, he nodded off to sleep. Awakening with an odd but familiar sensation, he discovered himself in tears. The same thing had been happening all the way across the Atlantic. It was strange because his easting had been a particularly invigorating run, spinnaker set and westerlies across the port quarter at seventeen knots. Brilliant autumn weather. But night after night he would go to sleep in perfectly good spirits and wake to feel some old misery slinking away with an unremembered dream.

Finally he put on some Dorsey brothers music to guide himself through the darkness. For whatever reason, the old numbers sounded unreasonably sad. The image of the island stayed with him relentlessly until he could almost see it, glowing out on the dark ocean.

In one late dark hour, mysterious bibliolaters came in over the open transmitter.

"A false balance is abomination to the Lord," said a stern female voice, "but a just weight is His delight." The rest was static. Browne went to sleep on deck.

He opened his eyes to a peculiar amber light. There was sand on his eyelids and between his teeth. When he stood up, he felt a light salting of the stuff on the deck beneath his bare feet. From every quarter, the horizon seemed to be closing in, visibility eroding at a quarter of a mile or so. The sun was obscured but its glare was all around him. The wind was hot and comfortless. He checked the compass, then went aft to inspect the steering vane. *Nona* was on course in the strange fitful air. Each breeze lifted columns of spindrift from an oily, seamlessly rolling sea. Uneasy, heavy-handed, he went below and checked his radar scanner. The beam was reassuring. Half unwillingly, he climbed to his rack and went to sleep again.

His dreams were vivid and sweaty, incorporating a vaguely familiar noise that suggested telephone wires or nights in the country. Opening his eyes, he saw something in motion on the highest step of the companionway. The cabin was darker than usual; something was blotting out the fingers of light that usually penetrated the reinforced cabin windows. Then a moment came in which he connected the noise to what he was seeing and he stood up in terror.

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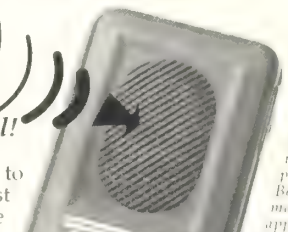
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Insects infested the wind. Th companionway steps were covere with them. They were spilling like foul liquor from the higher to th lower steps and had covered th cabin windows. Charging up the lad der he crushed a million brittle cara paces underfoot. Once on deck, h refused the sight he saw. The thing glided down singly like so man paratroopers and in writhing cluster that rolled like tumbleweed and skit tered across the main hatch. Eac shroud and stay was alive with them the mainsail and mast crawling.

In his first active, waking mo ments, he felt the mass of fiddlin legs and antennae cover his bar skin. Briefly, he was able to contro his own panic. As he brushed them from his face, he became aware o the sound they made.

Browne ran headlong for cover which the deck did not afford. Fran tically, he tried to pry the insec bodies from his face. Their man dibles adhered. With his own shril curses in his ears, he wrapped one arm around the boom, stared down at it, and saw it crawling.

All around the boat, as far into the murk as he could see, the sur face of the water was smothered, as though the swarm had displaced the ocean. *Nona*'s wake cut a swath through them, churning out crea tures and soiled white water. Only when the noise stopped could he see that they had stopped falling. Teeth clenched, shuddering, he brushed himself off. He stamped as many as he could into the deck. Finally, more calmly, he took a hose to them, supplied from the bilges. He labored for hours to clean the decks and lines and brightwork. For weeks he would find them in unlikely places, sometimes in disgusting numbers. The insects were a little over an inch long, pale yellow and black, with delicate spotted wings folded against the thorax. Holding one spread-winged against a page of his log, he was reminded of a fantastic print he had seen reproduced long before. He thought he must have seen it in a book during his school days. Very distantly, he could remember the book as disturbing, showing things that were outside his

xperience then and of which he anted no part.

In Vietnam, the battle-crazy urps who lived across the landing rip from Browne's Tactical Air ontrol base had made a legend of eetles that entered the brain and ntaminated the mind. Some of ne Lurps had believed so intensely the beetles that they had succumbed to the infection. That vening, Browne entered the infestation in his log to bring the experience under control.

"1400 GMT, 1300 local, course 30 degrees, wind off the African oast. Khamsin or harmattan rought a cloud of insects, flying or rborne, covered *Nona* and the surounding sea. Hours cleaning up." eyond that he could think of othing to write. Later, he thought, e might sit down to his journal and ake a literary event out of it all.

Just before sundown the unholesome mists cleared and a entle breeze rose astern. rowne watched the passing of the light with a troubled mind.

Between Bahia and Trinidade, here were starry nights and glass nd useless breezes too feeble to dry weat or raise a hair. Each morning ne sun came up on distant ghostly louds that never changed their nape or bearing, the same clouds, it eemed, steaming on station, day fter day. To coax what little air here was, Browne had raised a hoster jenny, a big light sail with a Kevlar luff sheeted to the afterdeck. He spent hours looking over the tern, watching the little millpond ipple of the current under his keel. The water was crazy blue, painted, Brazilian.

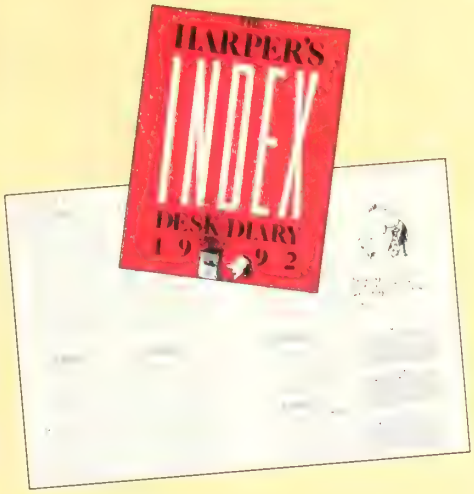
Once a stormy petrel settled safely on the boom to show him how ittle wind there was. When he pproached it, it fixed him with a vise little eye but never shifted. Out of curiosity he reached his hand oward it. The bird made a quarter urn on its perch and pecked at him. Then it shot off, racing eastward an nch over the surface. As though here were anything for anyone out here.

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Browne made a log entry: "Mother Carey's chicken on a fuck-you note."

A not too suitable reflection.

One night he turned on the radio and scanned the dial in search of a few sounds. The clown colors of the sunset had put him in mind of tropical riot, sambas, sibilant Portuguese. What he got was a religious lady on the customary band.

"Many of you have written in," said the grimly English religious lady, "to ask what is meant by God's covenant."

Browne opened a can of peaches and settled down to listen in spite of himself.

"By God's covenant," the lady said, "is meant the job that we are meant to do. If the boss gives you a job and you do it and are paid for it, then you have kept your covenant with the boss. But if you do not do the job, do not expect the boss to pay you.

"God has a job for all his creatures," the lady said, "for everyone in his kingdom. We must each do ours. For we are either covenant keepers or covenant breakers. Are you a covenant keeper or a covenant breaker? You must think about it.

"If you are not a covenant keeper," the lady said, "then you are in rebellion. I wonder how many of our listeners are covenant keepers. I hope it is very, very many. How lovely it would be if all our listeners were covenant keepers. I hope that none of our listeners are in rebellion."

"Not me," Browne said.

"To be in rebellion," the lady went on, "is to be alone. It is to be insane. For all reality belongs to God."

"I disagree," Browne said.

"We must all remember," the lady said, "what we are told in Hebrews 4: 'For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' "

Browne found it curious to consider the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. The dividing asunder of joints and marrow was a sight he knew, familiar to him both from the dinner table and the aftermath of tactical air support. One might think of osso buco but also of someone's arm, impossibly bent, its boiling tubes exposed to flies, its red-mottled white bone to beetles. Hebrews 4, Browne thought, unquestionably had war and sacrifice on its bloody mind.

Overhead the stars were exquisite and, inviting reverence, featured the Southern Cross. Let him with whom we have to do, Browne thought by way of prayer, never sunder my spirit from my soul. It certainly did sound like insanity. Let him with whom we have to do have nothing to do with me.

When the fax with everyone's position came in, awakening him, he found himself disinclined to read it. It was as though he wanted not to be in a race. Which was not to say, he thought, that he wanted not to win one.

He actually left the fax unread, except for the section about the weather. Not checking it was a little stupid, but he was in his own house, in his own kingdom, and he supposed he would find out about the others soon enough. Is this self-confidence or cowardice? he had to ask himself. Independence or spite? The church lady's broadcast had put him in a vein of self-examination. He felt as though he might be in rebellion after all.

At dawn the next day, the same clouds were stretched out in convoy along the eastern horizon. The motionless sea changed with the sky from violet to smoky blue. Browne watched it close over his little wake. When the heat of the day came on, his rebellion took the form of a refusal to patiently endure another stifled day of calm. The silky glowing surface of the water, its cool blue promise, drove him to action.

He paid out a sheet to trail behind *Nona* as a safety line, its end wrapped around a belaying pin. The

ther end he secured to the main-
ıast. He left a bar of saltwater soap
n the afterdeck. Then he stripped,
ent forward to the bow, and leaned
gainst its aluminum rail for a
ıoment to take a measure of the
oat's faint forward motion. In the
ext instant he took a breath and
ived over. The warm, still water
losed welcomingly around him.
Jnresisted, he pushed deep and far.
When he surfaced, his head was six
et from *Nona*'s hull. He swam a
roke and put his hand against her
kin; he could barely feel her sliding
ast. Turning over, he swam a few
rokes aft, and when the sheet
ame by he seized it and pulled him-
lf up to the boat's stern ladder. He
oaped himself and did it all over
gain. The satin water, the rush of
lence and surface in his ears, the
lt on his lips—all made him feel
enewed. When he had played the
ame for a while, he made himself a
ınch of crackers, canned crabmeat,
nd vegetable juice and went to
eep in the cockpit.

By late afternoon, only shifting
ght had changed the stock-still
iagram of boat, attending clouds,
nd sea. He went swimming again;
was a drill with a rhythm, a good
ay of staying in shape. He decided
e would keep at it through the
alms.

Once he broke the surface of the
ater to find the upper world in
nfamiliar shadow. From some quar-
er of the sky a cloud had come
cross the sun. Browne swam on his
ack, squinting at the sky. He felt
imself rise on an invisible swell
nd, looking over his shoulder, saw
ne ghoster slowly filling, its con-
ours darkening and curving as it
uffed out. The boat began to
oan; he saw it heave and slide for-
ard, making a sound against the
rface like rain in leaves. Then,
efore he knew it, the trailing line
as rushing past him. He made an
wkward overhand reach for the
elaying pin at the end of the sheet
nd felt it slip through his fingers. In
ne growing distance, his future life,
ne *Nona* was sailing on alone, leav-
ng him her new wake. Calmly, he
vam after the line, in strong con-
dered strokes that increased his

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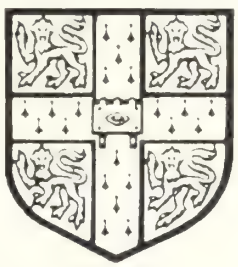
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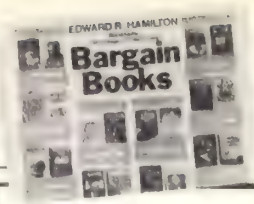
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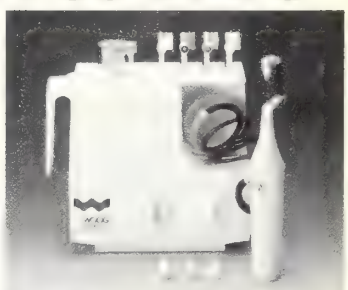
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Facts About Israel and the Middle East (1)

Do the media feed us fiction, instead of facts?

...y that, by dint of constant repetition, white can be made to appear black, good can get ...ed to mighty evil, and myth may take the place of reality. Israel, with roughly one-thousandth ... world's population and with a similar fraction of the territory of this planet, seems to engage ...lly disproportionate attention of the print and broadcast media. Unfortunately, much of ... the media tell us – in reporting, editorializing, and in analysis – are endlessly repeated myths.

What are some of these myths?

■ **Myth:** The "Palestinians" are a nation and therefore deserving of a homeland.
Reality: The concept of Palestinian nationhood is a new one and had not been heard of until after the Six-Day War, when Israel, by its victory, came into the administration of the territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip. The so-called "Palestinians" are no more different from the Arabs in the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, than Wisconsinites are from Iowans.
■ **Myth:** Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank"), and the Gaza Strip are "occupied Arab territory".
Reality: All of "Palestine" – east and west of the Jordan River – was part of the League of Nations mandate. Under the Balfour Declaration all of it was to be the "national home for the Jewish people". In violation of this mandate, Great Britain severed the entire area east of the Jordan – about 75% of Palestine, and gave it to the Arabs, who created on it the kingdom of Transjordan. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, five Arab armies invaded the new country in order to destroy it at its very birth. They were defeated by the Israelis. The Transjordanians, however, remained in occupation of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and East Jerusalem. They proceeded to drive all Jews from those territories and to systematically destroy all Jewish houses of worship and other institutions. The Transjordanians, now renamed "Jordanians" were the occupiers. Israel regained these territories following its victory in the Six-Day War and has administered them ever since. They have not been annexed. Their final status will be decided if and when the Arabs will ever sit down to talk peace with Israel.
■ **Myth:** Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") are the "greatest obstacle to peace".
Reality: This is a totally new formulation, recently put forward by Secretary of State Baker. He and the president seem to be obsessed by it. Fewer than 100,000 Jews are settled in these territories, living among about 1.4 million Arabs. How can Jews living there be an obstacle to peace? Why *shouldn't* they live there? About 700,000 Arabs live in Israel proper. They are not an obstacle to peace and nobody, including the Israelis, consider them as such.
■ **Myth:** Israel is unwilling to yield "land for peace".
Reality: The concept that to the loser, rather than to the victor, belong the spoils is a radically new one, never before thought of in world history. Israel has emerged victorious in the five wars imposed on it by the Arabs. In order to make peace, it has returned over 90% of the territory occupied by it, specifically the vast Sinai Peninsula, to Egypt. That territory contained some of the most advanced military installations in the world, prosperous cities and settlements, and oil fields developed entirely by Israel that made it independent of petroleum imports. In the Camp David Accords (1983) Israel agreed to autonomy for Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") with the permanent status to be determined after three years. No responsible Palestinian representation has been available to negotiate with Israel about this.

The greatest myth of all is that Israel's administration of the Gaza Strip and of Judea/Samaria is the root cause of the conflict between Arabs and Jews. But that is nonsense and flies in the face of historical reality. The Arab desire to obliterate the Jewish presence in Palestine, and since 1948 the Jewish state long predates that territorial administration. The root cause of the conflict is the total unwillingness of the Arabs to tolerate any "non-believers" to be in control of even one inch of what they consider "sacred Arab soil". And they don't just mean Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip. They mean Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the whole state of Israel. No change in the Arabs' attitude seems to be in the offing. But until there is such a change, no peace can possibly come to this troubled area.

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speed with every kick. After fewer than a dozen he had caught the sheet; he wrapped it around his wrist and let the boat's sudden strength haul him for a while.

Back aboard, he stood looking back at the empty sea where he had made an object. Although the flow of the wake went on and the camber of the head sail suggested wind, he felt no breeze against his naked body. In the grip of a sudden notion, he hurried forward and dived ahead of the boat again. This time his heart raced, not with a true panic but with a safer, imagined one. All the same, he swam as hard as he could and when the sheet went by seized it with both hands and pulled himself home. He did the same thing again and again until he was almost exhausted. There was no sign of the cloud that obscured the sun before.

Afterward he lay down again on deck, half sleeping, half dreaming of the shore, childish days in the surf, summer birthdays, and his parents. In his single true dream, the sky had gone dark and he was swimming in warm water littered with floating straw. He opened his eyes to faded blue. The sun was low. Physically he felt very tired.

He had put his trunks on and was sitting in the cockpit when, on the edge of a vision, a shadow like that of a sail passed along *Nona*'s bow. Leaning over the rail, he saw that it was an enormous shark just under the surface. The thing seemed unseeing and mechanical, barely animate. Once past the stern it swerved and came along the hull again. This time its dorsal fin broached slightly, silently sheering an inch or so of the breathing world. Browne crouched absolutely still to watch it pass. It was perfect, he thought. Worshipful. At home, unlike him.

When he tried, sitting at his navigation table, to describe for his journal what had happened—his swimming, missing the line, the thing coming—he could not make it turn out right. Nor could he quite manage the thing in memory. Remembering it, he felt both fear and longing, insulted and exalted.

In the middle of the night, when

he next false breeze came up, Browne shivered and slaked his peculiar thirst with water.

He lazed against the mast reading. He had brought along some published memoirs by solitary sailors to reacquaint himself with the form. As it turned out, he found the books hard going. Except for Slocum, even books that had kept him reading through the night ashore seemed to lose pertinence at sea. The authors all sounded alike. He suspected them of cribbing from one another. The style was that of naval history, English and high-hearted.

They are writing about what cannot be fully described, Browne thought. They reduced things and provided no more than what they knew was expected. It was useless, Browne decided, to speculate about the men themselves. Who knew what they were really like? They seemed not much like him, but there was no way to tell. The books gave nothing away.

Browne was used to being where others were not like him. In the past, it had sometimes been possible to find a few kindred spirits. But not out here, he thought, inspecting the horizon. It looked untroubled, perfectly benign. No kindred here.

Seated atop the hatch, he leafed through the stack of books, inspecting the jacket photographs of his memoirists. They were all suitably lean and leathery. Well, he thought, I can do that. Things had their public side, and it was not altogether dishonorable to pose. He wanted a book or a cassette of his own. He was sure he could come up with the necessary posture and humorously tough-minded prose.

As the sun rose higher, Browne fought the shade of his mainsail with Francis Chichester. Half dozing, the thought struck him of what it might be like to record the reality of things, matched with the thoughts and impressions it brought forth. To find the edge on which the interior met the exterior space. It would not be something of general interest, Browne thought, only of a morbid fascination to certain minds. Some-

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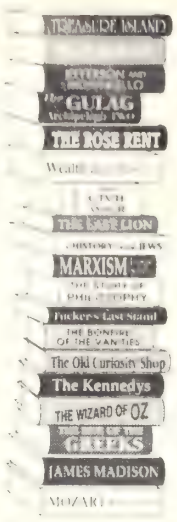
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that
elf to very
If he could keep
: how things really
might return a little of it
time. The past was always disguising itself, disappearing into the needs of the moment. Whatever happened got replaced by the official story or competing fictions.

Once he had succumbed to the temptation to telephone home via the high-seas operator, in violation of his own instructions.

"I know what people expect," he had told her. "I've read the books and I know the lingo."

"Just be yourself, Owen."

Late in the day, the true trades rose behind him, preceded by their long blue swell. It was as though lies summoned forth the things themselves.

"Bandmaster," Browne said aloud, "a little music, if you please."

He put on an Elgar tape, *In the South*. Very grand it was.

When the wind looked like hanging on, he decided to rig the spinnaker. When that was done, he took a sponge bath and put on clean clothes in celebration of the bright brisk weather.

His face in the mirror showed a bad sunburn. He had not been shaving and had not seen his own face for some time. The sight of it gave him an odd thrill of fear. He stuck a Band-Aid on his nose, put on his windbreaker and a Tacron-26 squadron cap, and settled in the cockpit to wait for the next position reports. He kept a notebook by his side.

The wind was steady all through the afternoon, but Browne found no reflections worthy of his notebook. Voices from the false sea-stories he had been reading stayed with him. He could achieve neither the correct attitude nor the appropriate language. It was another case of things not being what they were supposed to be.

Around evening he had another great attack of desire for his wife. After the lust was temporarily taken care of came loneliness.

She had told him not to perform so much. That people did not expect it. To be himself.

His father had been a professional authority on expectations. Browne lay back and watched the fluttering telltales.

"What about it, Dad?" he asked aloud. "Can I just be myself then? How about it?"

The very notion of such a question filled him with hilarity. He rolled in the cockpit laughing, imagining his father's voice gathering force for the reply.

"Yerself?"

It was too funny, Browne thought. First the mild and reasonable mode.

"Be yerself, you mean?"

That had been the time of terror, when the pitch changed and the voice ascended sweetly toward the thunderous heights on which it would charge itself with fury.

"Are you inquiring, my son, as to whether your private person will be deemed suitable for the station in life toward which you aspire?"

Browne clapped his hands and laughed harder. He could actually hear the old man's voice.

"Right, Dad. How about it?"

"You?"

A guy went slack, the wind changed, something caused a luffing in the main. He heard his father no longer enraged but cursing and weeping. That, of course, had been the other side of things.

In the last of the light he put on his safety harness, secured the spinnaker, and ran up an all-weather jib. His SatNav position located him at 36°36' south and 27°33' west, a formidable combination of treys. He sat up for a while taping preventers, listening to tangos. Eventually, he climbed in the rack for some proper zees.

If I have forgiven him, Browne wondered, nodding off on the wholesome swells, why is he out here, waiting for me?

The southern summer, Browne discovered, had light more radiant than that of autumn in Connecti-

SOLUTION TO THE SEPTEMBER PUZZLE

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NOTES FOR "CIPHERS"

Pairs of unclued DOWN entries form homonyms of the unclued ACROSS answers, plus the title: BOO/TEAKS/BOUTIQUES, FIR/LOAD/FURLOUGHED, QUEUE/BUOYED/CUBOID, WAIF/ERRORS/WAYFARERS, SOUGHT/EARN/SAUTERNES, SIGH/FURZE/CIPHERS.

ACROSS: 1. LOB-OS(rev.); 7. CON CUSSED; 8. UTAH, hidden in rev.; 9. AWOL, hidden in rev.; 10. HO(ME)LY; 12. DEWY-EYED, anagram; 13. FLUE-N(o)T; 14. STA(MME)RS; 15. I-L-(E-XES, rev.); 16. HE-IRED; 18. RAKE(R)S; 22. SKIMS; 24. G(R)AB-BAG(rev.); 26. STILES, "styles"; 28. F-ORT-H; 29. LOONIEST, anagram; 33. KE(N-N)Y; 34. WAR ZONES, anagram; 35. (t)EASES. DOWN: 2. (b)ON(L)Y; 3. S(CH)EME(R)S, anagram; 4. US(HER)ED; 5. IDYLL, anagram; 6. S(leep)-HOTS; 11. HE(X)ED; 14. S(purns)-HASH-LI(n)KS; 17. RUMINANT, hidden; 19. (I'm)KE-BOBS; 20. GROCERS, "grow sirs"; 21. MATINE(anagram)-E(quity); 23. REEFER, two meanings; 25. B-ROW-N-S; 27. N(W...)OT reversed; 30. A(E)DO reversed; 31. ...N-WAS reversed; 32. D-O-S-S, last letters.

SOLUTION TO SEPTEMBER DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 105). (HERBERT) BLOCK: THE HERBERT GALLERY. The novel feature of this idea is that it would apply to the poor; there is nothing new about guaranteed incomes for the wealthy—and guaranteed profits and tax exemptions besides. Whether those things destroy the incentive of the rich to work for a living, I don't know.

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it. Its shadows seemed darker and
eper. Day after day, the sky was
minous. The cool weather and the
y pure air aroused him to a faint
citement. Every night, the dazzle
stars overhead kept him awake
d on deck.

He was tacking south, looking for
e big winds below latitude forty.
ince crossing the line, he had
und no air heavier than twenty
ots. Every day the fax reported a
ationary front off Patagonia. After
while, the bright intensity of
ings gave him a headache. He felt
though his personal rhythms were
fraction too fast. He kept starting
bs and leaving them incomplete.
he color of the water reminded
im of something he could not
ng to mind. It had grown a richer
ue as he had gone farther south.

One evening, he was on deck lis-
ning to the radio when the sky
lled with colored light. Curving
ands in violet and dark green
ndulated across the dark blue sky.
ank after bank of purple light radi-
ed from the southern horizon, in
gular repeated patterns. So orderly
ere the emanations that they
emed to Browne to be a kind of
gnal. It was hard to believe that no
nitary purpose was behind them.

The aurora reminded Browne of
e night sky over the Song Chong
alley in 1969. He had seen the
ost spectacular displays there,
racer rounds in red and green,
arachute flares every night. Behind
ach illumination was some inten-
ion, it was being organized and
oordinated, but to see it all was to
now that things had gone beyond
ne compass of human will.

Over the radio, as the colored
ghts ranged across the sky, a man
as explaining time.

"If we can speak of an absolute
ture and an absolute past," said
he speaker, who had a brusque
outh African accent, "we can also
nake distinctions outside the con-
nuum. What is outside and never
o be intersected by our lines of
vent? We call it 'absolute else-
here.' "

The aurora seemed somehow to
nterfere with the radio signal so
hat the lecturer's voice waxed and
waned with the throbbing of the
lights overhead. Eventually, it faded
away. The lights were still shimmer-
ing when the stars came out.
Browne looked up and saw his
friends from home, Orion and Canis
Major. Sirius burned away.

In the cabin, he tried, perversely,
to find the missionary station. He
had been listening to it with amuse-
ment almost every night since cross-
ing latitude forty. This time it was
not available.

At latitude fifty, although the
skies were still clear and the air
light, Browne secured the hemi-
spheres of his cockpit bubble to the
deck. To keep the Plexiglas clear, he
washed it with the Clear Aid he
used for his dive masks. He decided
to leave the bubble open until the
weather changed. The same evening
he sought out the missionary station
again. Instead there was more mere
physics.

"What are we to say," asked the
learned Boer, "of particle histories
occurring in imaginary time? How
can time be imaginary? Yet it can be.
For imaginary time works its force
on the continuum with the same
degree of influence as so-called real
time. How can we speak of histories
occurring over imaginary time?"

The signal faded out. That night,
lying in his bunk unable to sleep,
he found rest in the notion of
imaginary time. To consider it was
like being reminded of something
one had always known. It was as
though things had a delicious
secret side that had been inexplica-
bly forgotten. The trick was to
remember it in difficulty, so there
was something at the worst of
times. If we could experience that,
Browne came to believe, we would
understand a level of existence at
which things were basically all
right. He fondly remembered the
sound of the broadcaster's voice,
which seemed pregnant with that
experience. Although the savor of
the thing kept him from sleep, he
could not quite bring it
to bear.

He had stopped reading. In
Vietnam, at the worst of times, he
had been able to read himself clear

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out of the war, into history or else out of it, depending on the point of view. Now, with plenty of time, he somehow lacked the patience. And about music, he had found that it was necessary to be very careful. Certain music produced a confusion that was very hard to resolve. The best entertainment, Browne discovered, was his own thoughts. And then, as a kind of puzzle, there was the radio.

Browne had managed to locate the missionary station again. The reader, who sounded like an English-speaking African, announced that a dramatization from Genesis would be broadcast at 2000 Greenwich Mean Time. Browne decided to celebrate. In order to keep his thoughts clear, he had been fasting, living mainly on unheated, unmixed consommé. To accompany the broadcast, he undertook to prepare a homely feast—frankfurters Southern-style from his *Fannie Farmer Cookbook*, with canned tomatoes, chopped onion, thyme, and oregano.

Browne's feast proved a disappointment. He had spent the afternoon trying to clear his generator's fuel injectors; when he turned to in the galley, his hands were still fouled with diesel fuel. It was extraordinary the way the stuff managed to contaminate the ingredients of his proposed meal. Finally he gave up on it and opened a can of corned beef instead. He ate the corned beef with saltines and settled down to listen to the night's drama.

The missionaries' radio play was about Isaac and his family. Jacob was played by a young Canadian. Isaac sounded like an elderly Southern white man. Esau was played, somewhat humorously, by an African. Rebekah was played by a young woman with a sweet clear northwestern voice who reminded Browne of a woman from Oregon he had once known. It was apparent that there was some doubling up. Isaac was also Laban. Rebekah was both Rachel and Leah.

A narrator, who might have been the English lady Browne had been listening to before, reminded the audience of how Isaac had been spared sacrifice and of his adventures among the Philistines in the land of Gerar. She pointed out that even in today's world, travelers must be careful to protect their loved ones.

"How many of our listeners," she asked, "have been sojourners, have been among those of some other nation? How many have feared for their safety? Do we know," she inquired, "how we shall behave when our loved ones are threatened?"

Browne wrapped the remaining corned beef in foil, turned on his Kemper heater, and wrapped himself in a dry Navy blanket on his bunk as the dramatization began.

"Oh, that red pottage," said Esau, "that red pottage smells so good to me. I am faint with hunger."

"Would you like some?" Jacob asked. He sounded honest enough, a wholesome North American. "Then sell me your birthright."

Esau seemed to consider the offer in a stage whisper.

"I am afraid I'm going to die. What good is some old birthright to me?"

Browne thought he heard voices rising all over Africa. No! Esau!

"Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils," recited the English lady, "and he did eat and drink and rose up and went his way." She paused. "Thus," she proclaimed severely, "Esau despised his birthright."

The scene shifted to the tent of old Isaac. Rebekah instructed her son to kill the goats and she would make them into a dish the old man liked. Then young Jacob would bring it to him, and Isaac would bless him before he died. The girl of whom Rebekah reminded Browne had been the daughter of the captain of the U.S.S. *Pollux* out of Bremerton.

"But, *Mother*," said Jacob in a slightly epicene tone, "brother Esau is hairy! My skin is smooth. Father might feel my arm. Then he'd say I was a deceiver. He'd give me a curse instead of a blessing."

Rebekah's reply was sweet as country water. She sounded more resigned than conniving, like someone doing what she had to do.

"Upon me be the curse, my son. Only obey my voice and go fetch them."

So, of course, Jacob did. Any boy would.

There was one line that caught Browne's particular attention because he had often heard his father use it. "The smell of my son is as the smell of a field the Lord has blessed."

Later, when Esau found he had been displaced from his father's blessing as well as his birthright, his anguish was unsettling. The actor's voice trembled terribly. Who knew, Browne thought, over there in Africa, what his life was like, what things he'd seen?

"Have you only one blessing, father? Please bless me, Dad. Bless me also." But he was out of luck.

"And Esau lifted up his voice," declared the stern English lady, "and wept."

Browne listened to all of it, huddled in the blanket. He was unaware of the tears that coursed down his cheeks. Isaac let poor Esau know that he was basically on his own. Then Jacob went to work for Laban and Laban deceived him, substituted Leah for Rachel, extorted his labor. Then he returned and simple-hearted Esau welcomed him and miracles ensued.

When the dramatization was over, the lady came back on.

"When Esau came in from the field," she asked the public, "was he really starving to death? I hardly think so. Wasn't he only being greedy after a day in the field? Listeners will remember how he despised his birthright. Wasn't he a thoughtless young man?"

The English lady allowed that many listeners would feel sorry for Esau because of the way things turned out for him. She admitted it was only natural to do so.

"But what are we to think of Jacob's behavior?" she asked. She paused again for general reflection. "Didn't he act wrongly? What do listeners think?"

Jacob's behavior was absolutely unjustified, the lady maintained. It was wrong of him to impersonate Esau. She made no comment regarding Rebekah.

"What are we to think of this story?" the lady asked. "What message does it hold for us?"

"Good question," Browne said from his rack.

"Its message," the lady replied, "is that of God's almighty will. Never forget that God is strong. What is God's is likewise strong. The will of God binds the world and everyone in it. There is no setting it aside. There is no pleading against it."

Browne stirred in the bunk, his teeth set in rage.

"When we say that our God is a fortress," the lady declared, "we proclaim his strength. Would a weak God be worshipful? Would a weak God be worthy of love?"

In spite of the tender emotions he was experiencing—the self-pity, the loneliness, the disappointment—Browne found himself compelled to admit that a weak God would not be worthy of love. As for the English lady, she had no doubts whatsoever.

"Certainly not!" she declared vigorously. "The weakness of a little child is moving," the lady said. "We have all seen sick unhappy children. There are millions of them today. We pity them. We help them. This does not mean that we are worshipers of weakness. Almighty God is our all-eternal father, the Lord of hosts and stronger than the strong. Almighty God makes provision for the weak in his mercy," the lady went on, "as provision was made for Esau. But his weakness and heedlessness were not blessed. They were forgiven but not forgotten. There was no covenant with Esau.

"Doesn't all of nature proclaim the great strength of God? Can we not see the strong plants forcing their way through the earth? Can we not see our strong cattle thriving and providing for us? Don't we rejoice in the strength of our young men? Whom would listeners prefer for a son? Esau or Jacob?"

Browne considered his daughter, the only child close to his heart. She was without guile. There were many things he wanted to explain to her.

"I think they should prefer Jacob," the lady declared. "Just as Rebekah did. In preferring Jacob, Rebekah anticipated God's will. She

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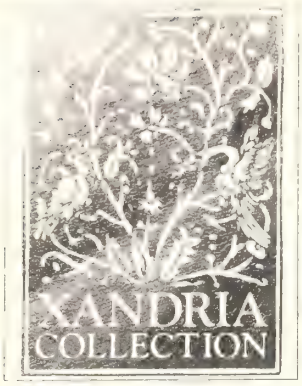
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was its instrument."

Browne pondered the admission into which he had just heard the Christians trick themselves. They were talking to Africa, engaging in primary process. You had to come a long way, he thought, to the margins of the world, to get the message straight. Of course, the woman was absolutely right.

"When God had made his covenant with Jacob, Jacob was raised up into Israel," the lady concluded. "It is easy for God to raise man to His purposes, when that is His Almighty will."

During the white night, the glitter of distant ice beguiled his mind's eye and denied him sleep. Around one he started up the engine to charge his batteries and found one of the starboard fuel tanks contaminated with algae. His other tanks, it turned out, were fine, but the injectors were glutted now with an animal-vegetable-mineral jelly that took him hours to clear away. Eventually, he was able to hook up and charge.

Wiping the scum off his hands, Browne considered God's will, how hard it was. Toward morning, he climbed into his bunk. For a long time he lay awake. His mind was racing and it struck him suddenly that there might be some form of false thought, notions that had their origin outside the brain and even outside ordinary reality. He went to sleep trying to work it out.

Sleeping at last, he dreamed. In the dream, he was swimming with difficulty, his chin raised awkwardly for breath. In reality, Browne was a strong and skilled swimmer. There was turmoil in the water behind him, and he was paddling away from it. There was a gray sky and angry voice. Browne knew that his father was behind him, drunk and enraged. It was some kind of swimming lesson. He woke up breathless and terrified.

Something had happened in life to suggest the dream, Browne thought. Then he was aware of the noise. It was a rending, the kind of sound that could be made by tearing open a taped package but ten times magnified. It was not the ordinary noise of bulkheads creaking, although he heard that as well. In the galley, hanging pans rang together. He climbed out of his bunk. *Nona* was rolling in heavy seas. The wind had come with a vengeance.

Browne hurried up the companionway and opened the hatch to see the gray sky of his dreams looming above a scattered ocean.

Listening to the wind, Browne recalled that, with luck, noise was the worst part of certain experiences. Lashed within his bubble, he struggled with the helm. For hours it had been blowing more than sixty miles an hour. His own intermittent headway was off the scale; sometimes it exceeded fourteen knots. Surfing down the crests brought on a double vertigo. Each slide promised to bottom out in nothingness itself, each stalling of the rudder brought him the sickening impotence of an unresponding helm. After each trough his bow dug deeper into the froth, the vessel shuddering as though scalded as she tried to rise. He felt as though he were riding the edge of a green wall that closed off possibility, thinly balanced, accelerating and about to fall. Spinning out, every minute.

The wind sounded as though things had stopped putting up with him. When their patience was expended, Browne considered, things had the forbearance of an insect and the same random energy. At first he had shouted back at it all, ready to sing along. At first it had sounded familiar—the good old thrashing main, school of liberty, cradle of the race. After a while, when it had compelled his closer attention, he heard the stone annihilation, the locust's shriek magnified from the abyss.

"Christ that my love was in my arms," he said.

The gale whistled in his slackening shrouds like incoming fire. He laughed in despair. He could imagine the long-legged crabs of Fiddler's Green rosining up their bows for him. He felt warm, sweet, and powerless, a morsel, a portion. Above all, alone. Also the wind, for all its fury, was not the only sound he

eard. There was a worse sound elow that made him prefer it.

The sound from below was nasty ideed. He could not remember hen he had begun hearing it. Just elow the doldrums, probably, in ie rising of the southeast trades. here was something human in its istiness, a squeal, a squawk. It unded like the gutter, like an scene threat, a New York objecn. Plastic. Listening, he clenched s teeth.

Its whine suggested loud vulgar nguage and cheap macho menace. id workmanship and sharp prace. Phoniness and cunning. Fuckg plastic, he thought, enraged. It unded like a liar burning in hell. astic unmaking itself.

That was what it was. And, of urse, he should have known. He id been seeing the crazes and havig trouble with the locker doors. ike a little tin soldier in a paper at, he thought, biting his lip, aded for the drain. He was riding decomposing piece of plastic rough an Antarctic storm.

"You bastards!" he shouted, trying outdo the wind. "What have you one to me? You fucking filthy vine!"

It was hard to force himself down to the cabin where the whine was udest. It reminded him of the kind f dirty laughter it was sometimes pedient not to hear. You are not alled *Nona,* bitch, he told the boat. ake bitch. You have no name. But e was not even a bitch. Just plastic.

He sat down at the navigation ble and started going through the art drawers in search of the boat's esign drawings. He had not seen em for months. The first docuent he laid hands on was the ugh copy of a brochure he had ritten himself. He stood up and, olding fast to the overhead rail, got read his own prose.

"Altan 36! Master-crafted! A seaned winner in the newest design! ll the elements of the precision esigned racer—attainable! Affordble!"

They were his own words. And, f course, he had approved the boat. Aore than that—in imagination he ad invented a perfect boat for it to be. It had been salesmanship by ontology, purveying a perfect boat for the perfect ocean in an ideal world. The very thing for a cruise to the perfect island, the one that had to exist because it could be imagined. He had been his own first, best customer.

With every gust the fiberglass screamed. The urgency in the sound was genuine, and he understood that, under sail, she could not stand up to weather any longer. He went on deck and, laboring furiously with the cockpit open to black sky and rain, dropped and lashed the main and genoa and raised a storm jib. He brought the boat to a close leach, all but hove to, a humble penitent posture.

Below again, he had to strip the boards of the cabin sole with a crowbar to reach the mast step. The devilish, spider-webbed craze patterns across its surface were worse than anything he had imagined. The makers of the boat had simply piled on extra fiberglass. With each tightening of the stays, Browne realized, he had been driving the mast-step down and bending the hull.

Clinging to the overhead rail, he began to smash the bulkhead cabinets with his crowbar. They were his own work, poor quality, of cheap material. When he had stove in the lockers that adjoined the main bulkhead, he saw that there too the glass was crazing. So it was no wonder, he realized, that his shrouds were slack, since the chain plate was secured there. All the secondary bonds were giving way. Again and again, Browne brought his crowbar down on the shiny, cosmetic cabinfittings of his worthless boat. With the sails down, the boat was pitching relentlessly. Browne lay across the cabin sole, his legs braced against the bulkhead, trying to buttress the mast-step with the ruins of the floorboards. He jammed the fragments of his cabinets against the angle between the hull and the main bulkhead. Every few minutes he had to turn away from work to retch over a bucket.

The suffering plastic ground on. It was like a last, terrible laugh. There is justice here, Browne thought. He had been trying to be someone else. He had never really wanted any of it.

The tie rods he found under the liner were not stainless steel rods but appeared to have been rigged out of galvanized wire. It made him laugh to see the way they had stretched because it was like a practical joke. Like a cartoon in which some furry creature's flying machine deconstructed itself element by element until the poor thing was left about to fall, humorously embarrassed and terrified, naked and unsupported over emptiness. Flightless furry me, Browne thought.

Drenched with sick sweat, he hammered the slats into place. Gradually he realized that the noise in the cabin had diminished. With the sails down, the pressure eased, the boat was relieved of its misery. He went on deck and felt ashamed to face the gale.

Eventually, he decided that he could not risk lying a-hull. When the wind shifted to southeast, he put out a drogue, winched it securely, and started northeasterly with the wind on his quarter. The drogue kept his speed down, but he had to stay at the helm to keep the course.

Hours later the wind eased, and he raised a storm jib again and went below to rest. Sleep eluded him in spite of his fatigue. Sickness came and went. Petty hallucinations assailed him. He found himself absurdly concerned with appearances. Everyone must have seen the poor set of the main. Anyone could have found him out, exposed his lack of knowledge and experience. It had all been pretending, he thought, as far back as memory. He was at the root of it. He was what raised the stink at the heart of things. There would always be something to conceal.

The sleep that finally came was shallow and thirst-ridden. In dreams, he was trying to overcome his father's loony drunken scorn with quiet logic. It was necessary to be patient because his father was highly intelligent and knew no limits and was capable of saying anything.

But reasonableness had been the strategy. There was always a chance

Continued on page 82

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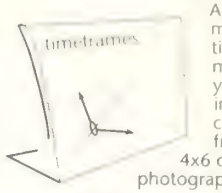
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Continued from page 79

you could surprise him and strike a spark of approbation. You had to stage an ambush to wring a good word.

Half waking, Browne felt the peculiar anxiety with which he had always awaited his father's laughter. If I'm not careful, he thought, thrashing in the bunk, he'll have me laughing too.

Browne thought he heard that little bubbling up of humor in the throat that preceded one of the old boy's amusing sallies. His heart fluttered, in fear of embarrassment. Then he heard the voice itself, dry and theatrical, heartless.

"Everybody loves you when you're someone else, son."

That was a good one, Browne thought. ■

October Index Sources

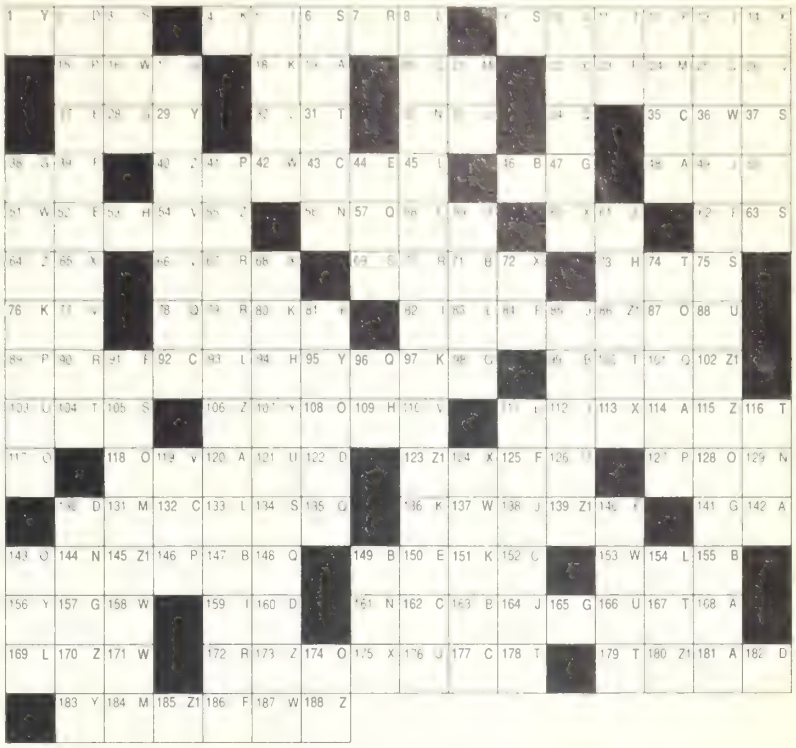
1 Center for Defense Information (Washington); **2** U.S. Congressional Budget Office; **3** U.S. Army; **4,5** Washington Institute for Near East Policy; **6,7** U.S. Congressional Research Service; **8** PNC Financial Corp. (Pittsburgh); **9,10** Robert Reich, Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass.); **11** National League of Cities (Washington); **12** *Time*—CNN poll, Yankelovich Clancy Shulman (Westport, Conn.); **13,14** *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Tokyo); **15** Gallup Organization (Tokyo); **16** U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission; **17** Slammers Wrestling Gym (Sun Valley, Calif.); **18** Applied Theater Techniques (Culver City, Calif.); **19** *Time*—CNN poll, Yankelovich Clancy Shulman (Westport, Conn.); **20** Little League Baseball (Williamsburg, Pa.); **21** Linda Judson (Cobb County, Ga.); **22** NAACP Legal Defense Fund (N.Y.C.); **23,24** Centers for Disease Control (Atlanta); **25** Condomania (N.Y.C.); **26** Population & Community Development Association of Thailand (Bangkok); **27,28** Nicholas D. Kristof, *New York Times* (Beijing); **29** *Maclean's* (Toronto); **30** *The Day America Told the Truth* by James Patterson and Peter Kim (Prentice Hall, N.Y.C.); **31** *The Young and the Restless* (Los Angeles, Calif.); **32** Center for Science in the Public Interest (Washington); **33** Coca-Cola Company (Atlanta); **34** Guinness Book of World Records (N.Y.C.); **35** Prince George's County Police Department (Maryland); **36** Woodstock Town Clerk's Office (Woodstock, N.Y.); **37** Zezé Flowers (N.Y.C.); **38** Tom J. Cade (Boise, Idaho); **39** Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (Augusta, Maine); **40** Metropolitan Police Department (Tokyo).

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 106

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: The first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 74.



CLUES WORDS

A. Loony, not all there 114 142 48 168 181 120 19

B. Prevalent in a people or district 163 46 155 71 99 147 149

C. Assails abusively 43 92 162 132 35 177 152

D. Welsh poet (1914–53; *Adventures in the Skin Trade*) 130 2 160 182 20 122

E. Butts of joints of pot 111 27 150 44 81 52 140

F. Subjoined 23 91 62 39 186 84 125 59

G. Cowardly person, craven (2 wds.) 98 25 165 17 47 28 141 157 38

H. Fastidious; delicate 53 94 73 109

I. Wandering, quixotic 13 82 5 112 50 159

J. Uttered imprecations; affirmed on oath 33 138 49 164 85

K. Frustrates; decays 76 97 18 4 136 151 80

L. Worshiper of images 30 93 83 154 10 133 169 8

M. Out-and-out, arrant, gross 24 131 21 184 45 58

N. Am. historian and folklorist (1888–1964; *The Mustangs*) 129 161 56 32 144

O. Flounder, walk unsteadily 117 87 174 143 118 108 128

P. Get the bearings of, east 15 127 41 89 12 146

Q. Limp; soft and weak 78 96 34 148 101 57 135

R. Showy, glaring 172 7 70 79 90 67

S. Find fault with, censure 37 134 69 63 6 9 3 75 135

T. Gradual wearing down or weakening 74 178 116 11 179 31 100 167 104

U. Wanderers 126 166 176 103 121 88

V. Stop, abstain 26 77 54 119 110 66

W. Purloins; deducts; subtracts (2 wds.) 158 187 4 51 36 16 153 171

X. Whom to suspect, says Foxey (Dickens, "Sampson Brass") 22 124 68 175 72 113 60 14 65

Y. Claws

Z. Insulting; repugnant 40 61 55 188 115 106 64

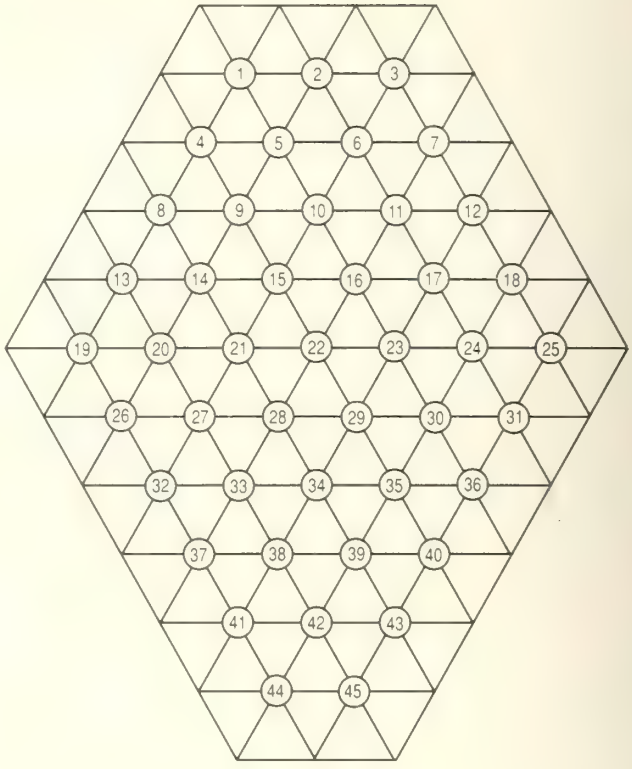
Z1. Japanese ornament used to fasten small objects to a sash 18 145 185 139 122

Hextracts

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.

Each clue answer is seven letters long. The diagram, however, provides spaces for only six of the letters; the solver must determine, in fitting in the answer, which letter must be removed. The other six letters are to be entered in the six triangles that form a hexagon around the clue's appointed number; they are entered in order, clockwise or counterclockwise, the exact position to be determined from overlapping entries. The two unchecked letters from each of the six corners in the diagram could provide AH! COLD CHILLS! The disposition of the seventh letter in the numbered spaces below the diagram will reveal a quotation and its author.

Clue answers include one proper name and uncommon words at 16, 19, and 31. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 74.



" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 ,"
39 40 41 42 43 44 45

1. We chart shifts for *The Observer*
2. Canonical meeting is more likely after church
3. Employees of company cut back about a year
4. Kind of pudding, a firm one with a bit of butter, turned
5. Predicaments resulting from scenes involving Republican
6. Worries about lead in truckloads
7. Excused desecrating of grave
8. Makes cryptics dense, nastily including clue's beginning with cipher
9. Urge and prod cooks for an ethnic soup
10. Curious about, for instance, a bunch of flowers
11. Go on, act strangely out of shape
12. Stranded, and a pain in bed
13. Apache chief's unfortunate choices
14. Flashed $1,000, and stuck with it
15. Flocks going marginally into strong winds
16. A name I spotted in some awkward social breakdowns
17. Piece of farm equipment raking endless manure at last
18. Negotiating height alone, diving like a bird of prey
19. Orchid-tinged ring inside eye membrane
20. Fabulous bird wearing awful English fabric
21. Put on watch the French accepted in trade-off
22. Most relaxed, each taking short nap
23. Chopped up 1-lb. meat potpie
24. Singer performing with horn
25. Reform school keeping one somewhat nonchalant?
26. Collector for charity gets three round objects in post exchange *(two words)*
27. Half dead, carried back and dressed for a ceremony
28. Instruments join in jazz sessions
29. Nations bordering on petulance, and poles apart
30. Through holding, survive being hit hard
31. Fish stuffed with outstanding cooking apple
32. He knocks over silk hat, and left in it
33. More sadistic about noon? That's a laugh
34. Long poem by Benét, without beginning or end and lacking sex
35. I have contracts with writers, first for daydreaming
36. Frisky stride, full of energy—it's fast for them!
37. Was aware, almost, about bad luck for joint
38. Upset U. S. Navy—decorate upper level of cruise ship
39. Dotty digs men a bit
40. Permit to leave division of Methodism is signed
41. Wacko converts in a cult
42. Crosby has no number to belt from Ellington's music, e.g. *(two words)*
43. Bring back half-German training methods
44. Gymnast flips drum about
45. Express contempt for money turned over for illegal booze

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Hextracts," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle, "Parting Words," are Mary C. Kelley, Augusta, Georgia; Henry Hook, Brooklyn, New York; and Lyell Rodieck, Washington, D.C.

November

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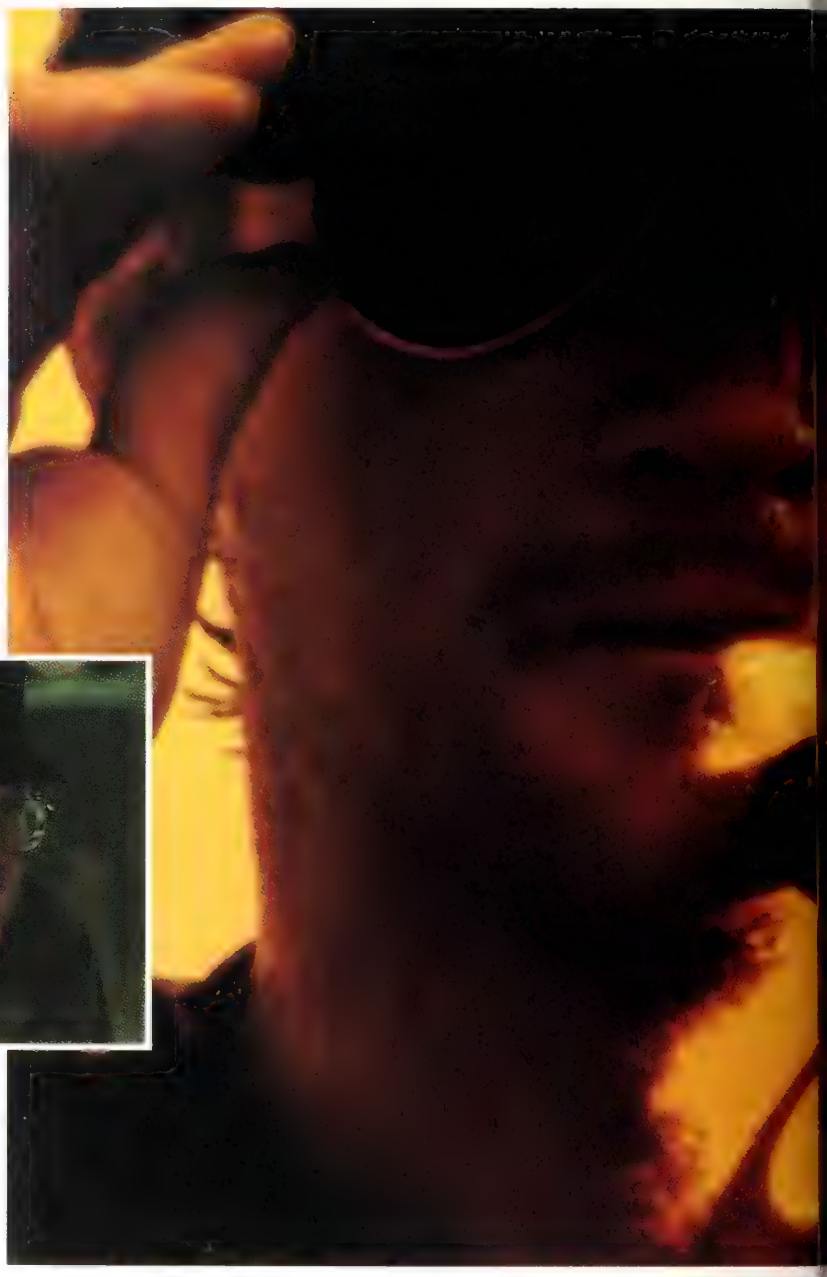
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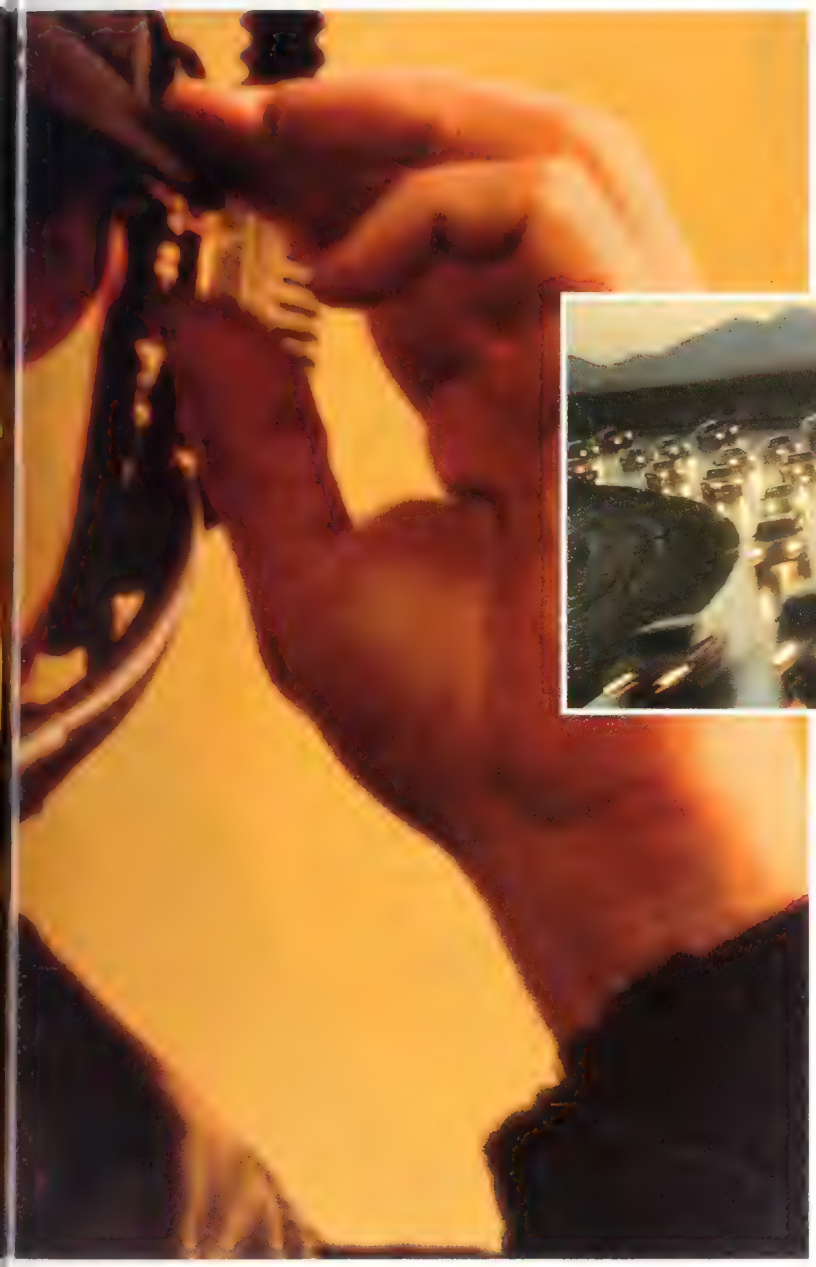
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LETTERS

On to Party Tricks

Christopher Hitchens's column on the Democrats ["The Loyally Complicit," July] was right on the mark. People in this country are desperate for leadership and vision, and until the Democrats decide to become a real opposition party, we will continue to drug ourselves with "a thousand points of light" and military adventurism abroad while the country crumbles. Voters like myself—leftward progressives who have found no other place to be but under the Democratic umbrella—have been screaming for years for Democrats to stand up and fight for what they believe in. Sadly, as Hitchens points out, Democrats would rather cling to their cushy, entrenched seats in Congress than risk a tough *partisan* challenge to the Republican hold on the presidency.

God knows, the Democrats do not lack bona fide issues on which to mount a vigorous campaign. Health care, education, the environment, better living standards for the working and middle classes, civil rights—all are areas that traditionally have been part of the Democratic agenda. Given their control of Congress, you'd think the Democrats would be continually pouncing on opportunities to put Bush and company on the defensive. A lot has been said about Bush's lack of a domestic agenda, yet one doesn't see many fresh and bold policy initiatives coming from the Democrats. They're *busy*. Too busy, according to Hitchens, minding th PACs and re-election coffers.

Craig Machado
Corvallis, Ore.

As a first-grader in Roslyn Height New York, I wore an ALL THE WAY WIT ADLAI button. Stevenson was smar Stevenson cared about people, yo could rely on Stevenson. He was Democrat, a good guy. My dad said so

In those innocent days, there wa never a doubt that all Democrats wer good guys. The world was easy to fig ure out. The party of Franklin D. Roo sevelt was simply the one tha produced men and women of integri ty. Republicans, within this scheme were the bad guys; Joe McCarthy and Richard Nixon were the standard bearers for the party that protected the rich, stole from the poor, wanted war, opposed civil rights, and, most despicable of all, put politics ahead of truth and justice. We had Harry Truman, Hubert Humphrey, Senator Estes Kefauver, John Kennedy—all men of conscience. They were statesmen; principles guided their actions, not money, power, or the quest for re-election. Their only goal was to seek truth and preserve justice. My dad said so.

Years passed, history elapsed; the Democratic giants fell. Yet I stubbornly believed that Democratic hearts and minds were still in the right place. However sullied by the political process, they had vision, I thought. And whatever misgivings I had about Jimmy Carter or Fritz Mondale concerning their woeful inability to govern, they represented many of the qualities that my father and uncles shouted about all those years ago. They cared about the little guy. They had char-

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cter. They talked about truth and ıstice.

Then, sometime around 1986, af- er Reagan was re-elected, the Party f the Good Guys finally waxed its ıustache, rolled down its sleeves, lipped on a plaid jacket and lime reen pants, and bought in at the tor- nerly all-Republican country club. And now, like the college students I each who have grown up in a coun- ry that has come to have little faith n politics or politicians, I am look- ng for a good party.

teven Lewis
New Paltz, N.Y.

Christopher Hitchens's analysis of he current state of the Democratic 'arty is itself an excellent example of vhat is wrong with the leaderless)emocrats. Of the fifty-five names in- cluded in his column, only one Amer- can woman is mentioned, Rachel Carson, who was not in politics and vho has been dead for decades. All of the thirty past and present)emocrats referred to by Hitchens are nale, even though recent polls indi- cate that a clear majority of current)emocratic support is female. Wom- en are now not only the silent major- ity of American politics, they are apparently also the invisible majority.

Perhaps women's-rights activist Eleanor Smeal and others are correct in calling for a third major political party that not only includes women in its leadership and candidate roster but also honestly promotes an agen- da that is supported by a majority of our female population. Both major parties are in no hurry to open up po- sitions of power to women and other emerging groups. The parties have been playing games with campaign finance reform for over three years, and the incumbent lock on congres- sional seats (94 percent male) con- tinues unabated. It is not surprising, then, that day care, health care, ma- ternity leave, gun control, equal pay/equal job opportunity, education, and other issues given high priority by women somehow continually fall through the legislative cracks.

George A. Dean
Southport, Conn.

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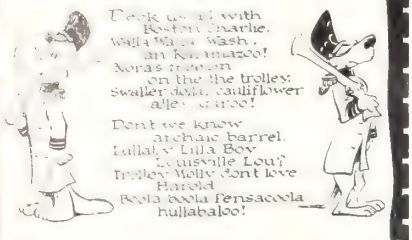
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The July forum of Republican heavies ["Does the White House Want a Domestic Policy?"] demonstrated the dismal state of what passes for politics in this country. The death of political ideals has never been more apparent. Yes, of course the White House wants a domestic policy, or at least the appearance of one. The well-timed Bush machine is finally going through the motions of pursuing a domestic agenda, just in time for '92. Not to worry. The administration's commitment to education and other domestic issues will disappear at precisely the same moment that the prospects for peace in Iraq disappeared last November—the instant the polls close.

That's really what it's all about, isn't it? Getting re-elected. Forum participant Richard Bond, deputy campaign manager for George Bush's 1988 presidential campaign, exhorts his fellow Republicans to "split the Democrats down the middle and throw downfield," thereby making it clear that winning is all that really counts in American politics. None of the participants objected to the football metaphor; none saw that politics should not be analogous to a meaningless exercise of professional athleticism. Politics should be, rather, the medium of public life through which the minds of an educated citizenry are animated by ideals such as "justice" and "liberty."

The forum participants at times argued with the zeal of true idealists, but they are idealists of the most curious kind: idealists without ideas. All of them are exclusively concerned with the process rather than the ends of politics. They routinely equate economics with politics and view government as an act of management, rather than one of inspiration; they have no real commitments except to holding power. This Machiavellian preoccupation with realpolitik produces outrageous cynicism, such as former South Dakota governor William Janklow's contention that "the war in the Gulf helped [Republicans] a lot on the fairness issue." In this view of politics, the formula is simple: death and mass destruction (whether justified or not) equals votes, or as forum participant Jack Kemp, Bush's secretary of housing and urban

levelopment, would put it, "political apital."

The only thing more depressing han this state of affairs is that a comparable group of Democrats would ave spoken in a similarly callous tashon. If the day has truly arrived when itizens are nothing more than mere onsumers of carefully contrived formulas, postures, and attitudes, then is a very dark day indeed, a day that romises only a darker tomorrow for hat we presently call American lemocracy.

David R. Koukal
Waukegan, Ill.

As I read the July forum, I couldn't hake a vague sensation that I was nissing something. Somewhere beneath it all seemed to lie an unstated remise that divided these men from ne. On the second reading I spotted it. ack Kemp, a man for whom I've deveoped a grudging but genuine admiation, lets it slip when he speaks about vhy we should not soak the rich. Why should we say to a guy...who has invented some microsystem or ome new business, *that there is a limit n his achievement?*" Kemp says. (The talics are mine.) What he has done here is to confuse achievement with noney, and the two are distinctly different. Achievement is what a person loes; money is only what he or she gets paid for it. Money, unlike achievement, can exist in superfluous quantities and can therefore be profitably taxed; achievement is entirely personal and can never be inherited.

Unfortunately, Kemp's confusion of money with achievement is not his alone. It has become the ubiquitous error of our time and place and has led to a catalogue of problems too long for a complete listing but among which we might include the unwitting sacrifice of long-term goals in favor of immediate gratification; the degrading of the arts to a level of amusements and pastimes; the corruption of religious thought into sideshow hucksterism and self-serving sentimentality; and the substitution of high-class trade schools for institutions of genuine learning.

Kurt Tidmore
Lubbock, Tex.

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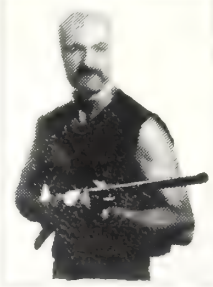
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The very day I read the Republica roundtable, which included Jac Kemp's strong plea for a capital-gain tax reduction as a stimulus for job cre ation, the newspapers carried a stor about the 1990 profits, commission and fees earned by some twenty f nancial operators. These individua had each earned from $23 million (Sa lomon Brothers trader Lawrence Hil brand, largely in bonuses for profit he racked up for the investment firm bond arbitrage group) to $95 millio (Bruce Kovner, a futures and curren cy trader at Caxton Corporation). No far down the list were leveraged buy out moguls Henry Kravis, George Roberts, and Jerome Kohlberg, with $90, $90, and $80 million, respec tively, much of it made out of the $1.34 billion sale of Beatrice Compa nies to ConAgra Inc.

Such information leads one to sug gest that any reduction in the capital gains tax that is not *directly linked to job creation* is merely a means of providing the wealthy with more Jaguar auto mobiles, Renaissance and Impres sionist paintings, Swiss chalets, etc. The notion that leaving money in the hands of those who already have quite enough of it will necessarily lead to productive investment should by now be so thoroughly discounted that no self-respecting politician, such as Kemp, would dare mention it as a ra tional solution to this country's in dustrial and employment problems.

Henry Stern
Petaluma, Calif.

A Black Counter-Reality, Part II

James Traub presents himself as a writer ["A Counter-Reality Grows in Harlem," August] who intends to ex amine the differences in perception between the two Americas, one black, one white, by reporting on the rhetoric of participants on *The Gary Byrd Show*, a New York–based radio talk show. It's potentially a valuable exercise. Had Traub carried out this charge, we, the readers, might have been enlightened. And who knows? Some mutual understanding might have resulted.

But this didn't happen. Traub's re port is unfocused, rambling, and gen-

ously laced with a thinly disguised stility toward Gary Byrd in partic- ar and blacks in general. Traub irri- tingly places himself at the center of ery issue, every discussion, and ev- y controversy within the piece. Far om being an analysis or critique of e latest "rap" in Harlem, the piece a filter for Traub's own conflicted ews about blacks. He respects no her perspective but his own, and his singenuous invocation of journalis- "objectivity" to present his tactile terpretation of Harlem's people is rticularly odious.

For example: Traub, the self-ob- ssed voyeur, admits to having been rprised (or is it disappointed?) that black people paid any attention to m when he wandered into their ighborhood. Such unseemly cha- in! The poor soul is absurdly grate- l to find a single black man who esn't hate all white people. He rites about "integration" and co-ex- tence as if he shares these ideals, yet clearly is contemptuous of what he w and heard in Harlem. One has to elieve that he is quite happy to leave ose crazy black extremists on the argins of polite society—Harlem, here they belong. He'd rather, I sus- ect, visit Harlem (like the zoo) for creation.

But of graver consequence is Traub's haracterization of American blacks' oncern for their present and future in is country as conspiracy-theory para- oia. I guess the motorist Rodney ing, whose beating by a group of Los ngeles police officers was recorded n videotape and broadcast interna- tionally, is a figment of our collective naginations. Harlemites were sound- y upbraided for their skepticism of fficial handling of the Central Park ogger and Tawana Brawley affairs. The youths involved in the former ncident were routinely described as animals" and "beasts" in the media nd by such notables as Ed Koch and Donald Trump. Yet no such epithets vere hurled at the white youths in- olved in the Howard Beach incident, he white youths who killed Yusuf Hawkins, or the white youths who re- ently battered a young black high school student into a coma in Atlantic Beach—all of which took place in metropolitan New York.

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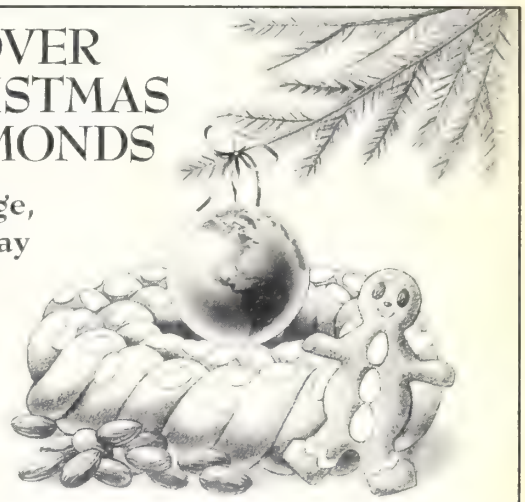
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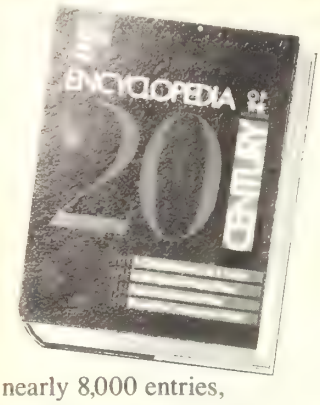
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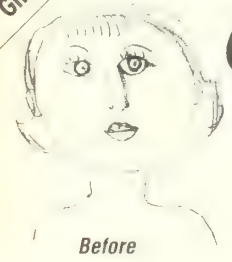
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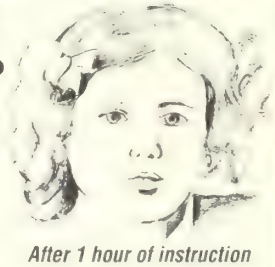
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For these reasons, any black person in America today, poor or middle-class, educated or not, who is not concerned about his or her survival in an increasingly hostile environment is deluded. Traub doesn't acknowledge the mountainous evidence that blacks are at risk: the differential between blacks and whites in the rates of incarceration, completion of high school, life expectancy, AIDS infection, proximity to toxic-waste sites, etc. Without such recognition Traub's report is only intolerant, shallow, narcissistic, and uninformed. He took an opportunity and turned it into to a sham. Too bad, because the rap from Harlem is sweet music to my ears. It demonstrates that people still have the power to control their own minds and that they have finally realized "history is a lie agreed upon."

Jennifer Bell
Sacramento, Calif.

The Profitable Baby Bells

Michael Moynihan's July annotation of a New York Telephone Company phone bill, "Ringing Up the Profits," provides forced humor at the expense of truth. Although the *entire* article reflects a failure to understand the telecommunications industry, three statements related to Ameritech, one of the seven "baby Bells," are patently false.

First, the Wisconsin Public Service Commission did not find that Ameritech charged its entire annual budget to telephone customers, and it did not disallow $33.6 million of those charges. A Wisconsin PUC audit disallowed $3.4 million, a decision we continue to dispute.

Second, the statement "Ameritech was caught charging customers for the Ameritech Senior Golf Open" implies that Ameritech was hiding this expense and that there was some sort of investigation. Neither is true. We were not "caught" by anyone. Ameritech considers these expenses part of our budget to promote the sale of major business services. The single largest portion of the expenditure for the Ameritech Senior Open is used to purchase national advertising during the tournament telecast. In fact, the tournament also generates revenues

at partially offset its expenses.

Third, the statement "Although one companies claim that profits om such gambits go to improving ser e, profits can also underwrite un gulated ventures" shows the writer's lure to understand telephone ac- unting. By law, we are required to ep separate books for regulated and regulated sides of our business. For e past six years we have invested $2 lion per year (for the regulated side our business) to improve service to e public. The Ameritech investment Telecom of New Zealand referred in the article was made from earn- gs retained in the business that be- ngs to our shareowners.

Moynihan would do well to get his ts straight before he does your read- s the disservice of misinforming em.

hn A. Koten
nior Vice President
meritech
icago

ichael Moynihan responds:

The three points Mr. Koten dis- ites are matters of public record. As result, I can think of no better way describe his version of events than simply false.

Regarding his first point, I wrote iat the Wisconsin PSC found meritech to have inappropriately iarged the cost of its headquarters customers. I did not say it charged s entire budget to ratepayers—what oten has chosen to deny.

As to the $3.4 million figure he tes, it is a different statistic than the ie I provide. Of a total of $114.9 mil- on in headquarters expenses which meritech submitted to the PSC (not ie PUC, as Koten calls it), regula- ors determined that about 30 percent as not properly attributable to itepayers. Of those, $3.4 million was tributable to Wisconsin, as opposed the other states Ameritech serves. ut before determining a figure for Visconsin, its area of jurisdiction, the SC had to estimate a total adjust- ient for all of Ameritech. To this end, identified $33.6 million in impropr- rly allocated expenses—the figure iven in the article.

Regarding the second point,

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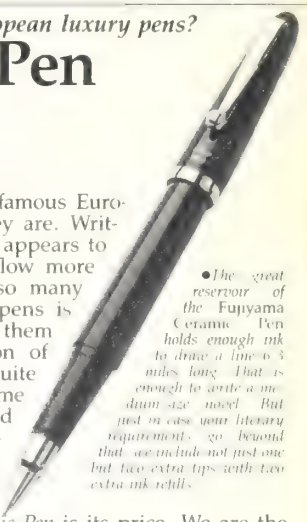
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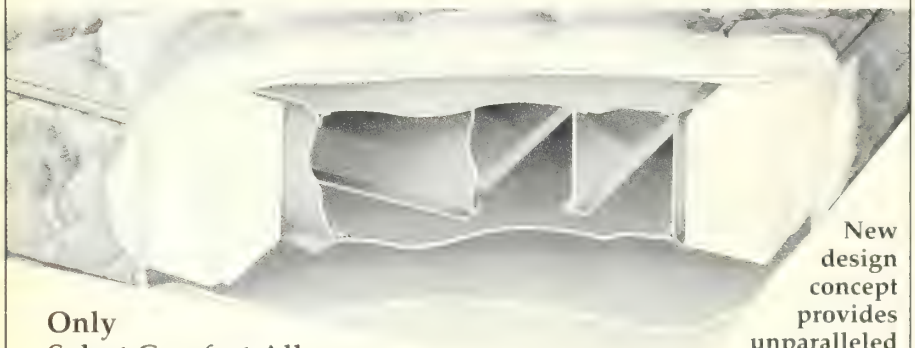
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...enthusiastically publicizes its ... in the open. What it did ... and what regulators un... on an audit was that it was ...ging this cost to ratepayers rather than shareholders, as required by law. To quote again from the PSC audit, "A review was performed to determine if any of the expenses determined to be *disallowable* had increased or decreased substantially in 1989. The major variation discovered was in public relations costs, which increased from $1,242,300 in 1988 to $5,484,810 in the first nine months of 1989. The major cause of this was *$2,636,165 of costs incurred in connection with the Ameritech Senior Golf Open golf tournament.*" [All italics are mine.] Once more, the facts are clear. Had Ameritech not been "caught," ratepayers would have footed this bill.

Regarding his third allegation, nowhere in the article do I accuse Ameritech of cross-subsidizing its i... vestment in New Zealand. Kote... seems here to be defending Amerite... against a charge I never make. T... fact that he takes umbrage at my stat... ment that profits on the unregulat... side can subsidize unregulated ve... tures, however, demonstrates the se... sitivity of regional holding compani... on this point. The co-existence of u... regulated businesses and regulate... businesses in one company guara... tees abuse—as numerous examples ... my article make clear. Where temp... tation exists, transgression usually fo... lows. "By law," Koten states, "we a... required to keep separate books f... regulated and unregulated sides of ou... business." True. The problem for re... ulators and the public is how to aud... those books when a "mistake" by th... company can so readily work to i... benefit.

Since my article was published, U.S... District Judge Harold Greene rule... that the RHCs may begin offering ... wide variety of information services, ... development I anticipated in the ar... ticle. The RHCs greeted the latte... news with what can only be describe... as glee. And indeed, consumers will n... doubt enjoy the new services, if an... when they arrive. The question i... whether the RHCs will develop gooc... imaginative services or merely us... their muscle to force mediocre ser... vices on captive customers. In short... will they innovate or, through merg... ers and acquisitions, throw ratepaye... money at Edsels? It is too soon to tell... but one thing is sure. To obtain gooc... services from monopolies, consume... vigilance will be necessary.

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NOTEBOOK

History lesson

By Lewis H. Lapham

To tell about a drunken muzhik's beating his wife is incomparably harder than to compose a whole tract about the "woman question."

—Turgenev

The coup d'état attempted in Moscow on August 19 (a.k.a. "The Putsch of Fools") came and went almost as abruptly as the hurricane that arrived that same Monday on the New England coast. Within a matter of hours a sizable bulk of the received wisdom of the last fifty years looked like the wreckage washing ashore in Narragansett Bay. The electricity in Rhode Island failed at noon, a few hours after the conspirators in the Kremlin told a press conference that Mikhail Gorbachev was nowhere to be found because "he has got very tired and needs some time to get his health back." When the electricity was restored (late in the afternoon on Friday), broken statues of Lenin were lying around on the grass in Gorky Park at the same aimless angles as the masts fallen into the sea at Portsmouth and Jamestown.

The Soviet Empire had dissolved, and the belief in communism had been canceled until further notice. Just as emphatically, and maybe more importantly, the failed coup d'état deleted the Marxist definition of history. As much an article of faith in the capitalist West as in the socialist East for the last half century, the Marxist orthodoxy promoted the thesis that history was a science, not an art, and that the character of particular individuals counted for less than nothing when plotted on the graphs of statistical projection. But in Moscow during the week of August 19 none of the leading incidents fit the measure of the familiar categories. The vagaries of the human spirit eluded the dragnets of the social sciences, and the traits of human personality proved more decisive than the forces of socioeconomic abstraction. Narrative triumphed over ideology, and the specific instance played havoc with the general theory.

What econometric model could have gauged the resonance of Boris Yeltsin's voice once he stood up to speak from the turret of a tank? Who could have foreseen the resistance of so many ordinary citizens, who refused to be cowed by the usual threats, or the resolve of the city officials (among them the mayor of Leningrad) who refused to obey the orders presented at the point of a gun? What policy institute could have guessed that the conspiracy of the reactionary right (on paper as impregnable as the Lubianka prison) would stand revealed as a collective Wizard of Oz, a committee of timid bureaucrats, as divorced from the truths of their own motives as they were ignorant of the passions that moved the broad mass of the Russian people?

Like characters imagined by Chekhov or Gogol, the would-be saviors of the old order fell victim to their emotions (primarily fear and thwarted rage), and they so quickly lost sight of the grand blueprint of historical determinism (the one mentioned not only in the Soviet textbooks but also at the fear-mongering seminars sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute) that they neglected to arrest Yeltsin, cut all telephone lines, seize all radio stations, and execute the captain of the Kremlin guard. Instead of parading their flags in the streets, they barricaded themselves within the maze of their beloved bureaucracy—issuing statements and decrees (about the shortages of food and the depletion of morals), ordering an immense printing of blank arrest orders and 250,000 pairs of handcuffs from a factory in Pskov, seeking to dam the flow of the future with a wall of paper.

By Wednesday they were consulting schedules for airline travel to central Asia. A cabinet minister retired to a hospital with a severe nervous disorder. A foreign secretary explained that his actions had been misinterpreted, his words badly misunderstood. A general left for the Crimea in the hope of apologizing to Gorbachev for all the confusion and noise.

Even as early as Tuesday, the second day of the putsch, I regretted the absence of Chekhov. Reading the accounts in the newspapers—by candlelight in a house as old as the Napoleonic Wars—I understood that the events in progress invited the perspective of a novelist, a playwright, or a historian on the order of Macaulay or Gibbon. The circumstances didn't lend themselves to long and earnest discussions of ideological intent. The agony of the Communist *ancien régime* was a story about the strengths and weaknesses of character, about the stain of terror seeping across the face of a deputy secretary beginning to suspect that maybe he had divided his loyalties into too many parts, about Yeltsin's impulsiveness that was also Yeltsin's eloquence and Yeltsin's courage. Like the last Romanov czars, the Emergency Committee relied on the ancient tradition of ignorance and passivity said to have held the Russian spirit in chains for at least a thousand years. The people who gathered in the streets in the rain made do with a show of words and paving stones, knowing full well that in the event of gunfire their cause would be lost in twenty minutes.

By avoiding the risk of action, the conspirators were left with their own

treachery and dithering incompetence. Their grandiose announcements reminded me of Chekhov's cast of provincial despots, of the ballrooms that he had described in Moscow and St. Petersburg, ballrooms crowded with pompous generals and complacent landlords bursting like sausages with news of the obvious and the sense of their own self-importance.

I invariably found myself trusting works of literature (if not Chekhov's stories, then the novels of Dostoyevski or Bulgakov) as the most reliable explications of the press reports. Within the entire canon of the collected works of Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, not so much as a single sentence would have offered even the faintest appreciation of the behavior of Vasily Starodubtsev and Aleksandr Tizyakov, respectively the chairman of the Farmers' Union and the director of the military industrial lobby. Both gentlemen apparently embraced the cause of reaction in the hope of acquiring (at long last and after God knows how much delay and how many insults) the dignity of an office inside the yellow walls of the Kremlin. All their lives they had wanted the importance of such an office, and nothing, not even the defection of the Tamanskaya division or the interior minister's suicide, could dissuade them from their purpose. From beginning to end, throughout the whole of the three days of the putsch, they remained fixed on the overriding question of moving furniture into suites 15 and 17. Tanks arrived and departed, and Vice President Gennadi Yanayev drank himself into an alcoholic stupor, but Starodubtsev and Tizyakov pressed forward with the great project, chivying the workmen, choosing wood grains, arranging the inkwells and the pencils. When Starodubtsev was arrested, he was still clutching the key to the kingdom so eagerly found and so irretrievably lost.

On Friday, August 23, the narrative of the bungled coup d'état changed into the story of the making of a new Russia, a new constitution, a new world, but it was still a story of human character (as opposed to the inevitable working out of political or economic doctrine), and through the scrim of the newspapers I could still hear the voice of the specific instance interrupting the broadcast of the general theory. As follows:

An old-line Communist, arguing for the dissolution of the Soviet Congress: "The most disgusting thing in the world is a frightened deputy."

A critic, age twenty-five, contemplating the troops standing disconsolately under the portico of the Bolshoi Theater: "That's not the way to do a coup. You remember how it was in Chile: fast and energetic. Ours was a thick porridge, a Russian idiocy."

A parliamentary exchange between two disaffected politicians:

FIRST DEPUTY: "Much of this congressional meeting has been undemocratic, I agree, and we've been put on our knees."

SECOND DEPUTY: "It's not correct to say Congress was put on its knees . . . This Congress was never off its knees in the first place."



During the last days of August vents in Moscow moved so quickly hat they could be seen as a single orm tide obliterating a shoreline or losing over the domes and towers of lost world. Gorbachev returned to loscow on a Thursday, expressing his ratitude to the democrats but still roclaiming his faith in the Commuist Party. On Saturday the Commuist Party all but ceased to exist, and y the following Tuesday the Soviet Inion had sunk, like Byzantium or roy, into the sea of oblivion. eningrad had become St. Petersburg, nd people greeting one another in ont of the Winter Palace no longer sed the term "comrade." In the parks nd public squares the fragments of ormer monuments acquired the staıs of driftwood.

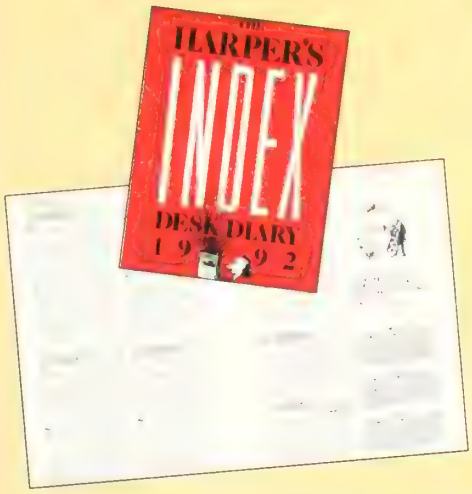
So also did the thesis of the Amerıan national security state. The work f deconstruction was more obvious in loscow, but in Washington I could nagine an admiral interrupted in the ıidst of his briefing (to the Congress r the Joint Chiefs of Staff) on behalf f another fleet of nuclear submarines ıeant to confine the Soviet navy vithin the margins of the Baltic Sea. thought of him in full uniform, pointng confidently at a map, reciting the itual phrases of the old geopolitical iturgy that for forty years had alarmed he Council on Foreign Relations, omforted the faithful on the conser-ative and neo-conservative right, lessed the defense industries with he gifts of a merciful God. In the monent that the putsch in Moscow ailed, the admiral might as well have een pointing at a map of the Assyran Empire. Suddenly he was speaking ı language as dead as Linear B, and the nce numinous words and acronyms Kremlinology, NATO, containment, lomino theory, arc of crisis, etc.) reerred to a dream of reality as distant n time as the Mayan worship of the un. The shock must have been awful o behold. Just when everything eemed so promising for the military heorists in the aftermath of the victory in the Persian Gulf, American foreign policy had lost its shape and definition, and among the members of the *ancien régime* in Washington the tone of voice was elegiac: Lt. Gen. Samuel V. Wilson, retired, once chief

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of the Defense Intelligence Agency—"All my pillars of intellectual support are pretty well gone, because the Soviet Union and Soviet forces as I knew them no longer exist."

On August 30, the day after the Soviet parliament declared the Communist Party subject to criminal investigation, I noticed a story in the paper under the dateline Pompeii. A team of archaeologists had unearthed the bodies of eight more Romans who, on August 24, A.D. 79, failed to escape the cloud of burning ash descended so suddenly from the volcano on Mount Vesuvius. Their faces were turned toward the sea, fewer than 200 yards from the town wall, and in the vain hope of avoiding suffocation they had wrapped tunics around their mouths.

I thought of the Marxist historians and social scientists, not only in Russia but also in the United States, who for so many years had tried so hard to change the art of history into a system of averaging the data. They portrayed the individual as a puny anonym, helpless and irrelevant, trapped like a rabbit or a statistic in the nets and snares of ideological abstraction. The determinist fallacy (as dear to the weapons analysts in Washington as to the English faculty at Yale) provided the intellectual band music for the Cold War. The theory of historical inevitability allied itself with the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction, and the will to power (as opposed to the freedom of thought or the play of the imagination) imprisoned the nations of the earth in an attitude of fear. It wasn't only the threat implicit in the weapons, although the weapons were many and terrible. It was the habit and pattern of thought bent to the service of the slogan. The brutal simplifications made it hard to imagine the world as anything other than a military campground.

But it turns out that the world is a far more beautiful place than had been represented in the story told by the prison guards. Far more beautiful, and by no means pre-recorded. As was made plain in Moscow in the last weeks of August, it is the individual who shapes the historical narrative, not (as the conspirators learned to their sorrow) the ream of blank paper that tells a story of its own. I the future is never any further awa than the next sentence, the next ges ture, the next best guess, then it be longs to the people who possess thei own history, rely on their own ex periments, and speak in their ow voices. The great argument going for ward in the storm of the world is th same in the United States as it is i what was once the Soviet Union. T the best of my knowledge it is th same argument that enlivened the scaffolds of Renaissance Italy and the annals of imperial Rome. In brief and in sum, it is the old and often violent argument between time past and time future, between the inertia of things-as-they-are and the energy inherent in the hope of things-as-they-might-become.

Although the study of history resolves nothing, it offers the ceaseless example of man defining and redefining the meaning of his existence. Empires rise and fall, so do families and so do theories of aesthetics, but on their way to death men make their own immortality. If it is true that time destroys all things, then it is also true that men seek to preserve what they have found beautiful as well as useful, and all of us inherit the immense treasure of skills, manners, customs, poems, equations, and sailing vessels rescued from the flood.

History can best be defined as the triumph of memory over the spirit of corruption, and if we draw comfort from the imaginative taking up of the experience of the past, it is because the study of history argues for a sense of community in the gulf of time, for a feeling of kinship with a larger whole and a wider self—with those who have gone before us and those who will come after.

If we can learn to see our own faces in the mirror of history, perhaps we can forgive ourselves for our weakness as well as fortify ourselves with the proofs of our strength. I don't know what Yeltsin will do tomorrow, or next week, or next year, but for the time being it is enough that he stood up on a tank in the square outside the Russian parliament on the morning of August 19 to say a few inspired words on behalf of the party of things-as-they-might-become. ■

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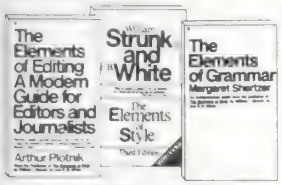
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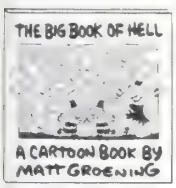
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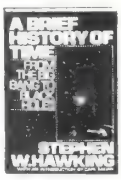
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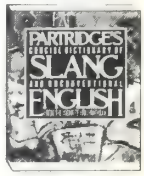
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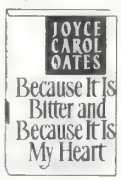
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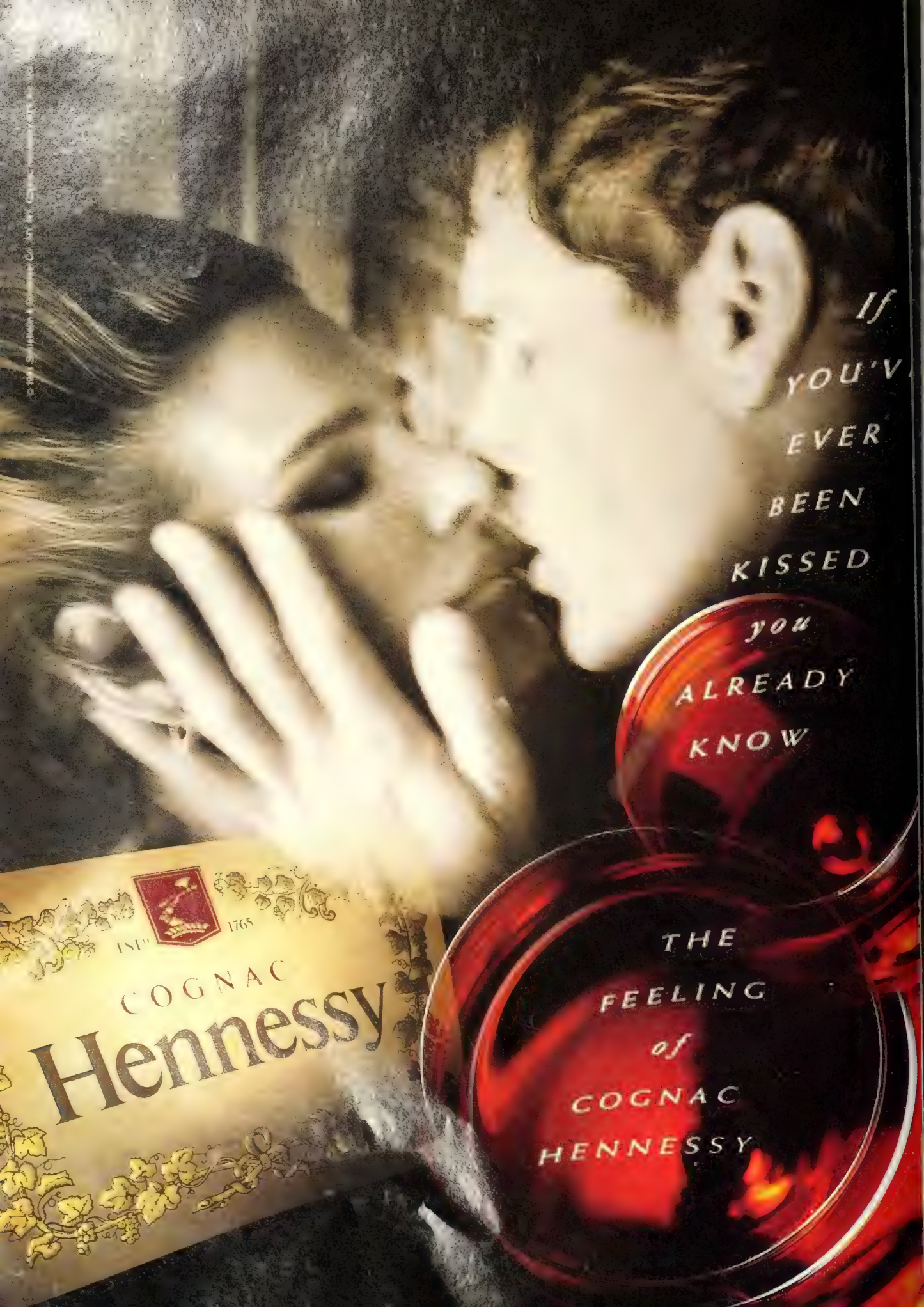
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HARPER'S INDEX

Percentage change, since 1980, in the average amount of tax an American pays to the federal government : 0
Percentage change, since 1980, in the average amount of tax an American pays to state and local governments : +9
Total amount the U.S. government has paid informants and witnesses in its prosecution of Manuel Noriega : $1,500,000
Amount the Resolution Trust Corporation has spent on mugs and golf shirts for buyers of seized S&L assets : $3,098.33
Number of the 30 U.S. cities with the highest housing vacancy rate that are in the Sunbelt : 29
Chances that an American adult has pawned something in the last year : 1 in 10
Percentage increase in the U.S. GNP during the first three years of the Carter Administration : 13
Percentage increase during the first three years of the Bush Administration : 3
Number of times Senator Tom Harkin used the word "bullshit" in public speeches last summer : 17
Number of florists on the White House staff : 5
Percentage of Americans who say that oatmeal is made of wheat : 48
Number of players reporting to NFL training camps in 1981 who weighed more than 280 pounds : 23
Number this year : 370
Number of cooks who called the Butterball Turkey Talk-Line for assistance on Thanksgiving Day last year : 20,298
Percentage of American college students who say they use a microwave oven every day : 33
Number of deodorants on the market that are targeted at preteens : 1
Number of yo-yos stolen at gunpoint last summer by a Baltimore ten-year-old : 1
Number of Americans who have been shot in the last decade by children under six : 138,490
Rank of murder, among the most common causes of on-the-job death for female workers in the United States : 1
Change, since 1979, in the average annual earnings of a black woman with only a high school diploma : +$279
Change, since 1979, in the average annual earnings of a black woman with a college diploma : –$744
Number of times the phrase "happens to be black" has appeared in the *New York Times* since January 1990 : 17
Number of times CBS interrupted *Miss Teen USA* on the first night of the Soviet coup with bulletins on the crisis : 0
Average number of sitcom laughs an American hears during a prime-time season : 12,000
Percentage of Americans who say they are "addicted" to television : 13
Average number of drugs prescribed each year to an American over 60 : 16
Percentage of Americans over 60 who say that spandex clothing is "in" : 49
Percentage of American adults under 30 who say that investing is "in" : 70
Percentage change, since 1988, in the Dow Jones average : +50
Percentage change, since 1988, in U.S. corporate profits : –17
Percentage of Americans who say that the first thing they'll do when the recession ends is "go out to dinner" : 48
Number of cellular phones checked in the cloakroom by patrons each week at Le Cirque, the Manhattan restaurant : 3
Estimated number of "Schwarzkopf filets" served since March at Gallagher's, the Manhattan steakhouse : 15,000
Number of tissue samples from Lenin's brain stored in the Moscow Brain Institute : 30,000
Population of Abkhazi, the smallest ethnic group in the Soviet Union to declare its independence this year : 105,000
Percentage of Lithuanians who say that their country's health-care system should be run mainly by the government : 33
Percentage of Americans who say that their country's health-care system should be : 69
Number of Americans treated last year for bowling-related injuries : 22,515
Number of last year's NEA grant recipients who perform mime : 5
Estimated number of Americans who do macramé : 6,500,000

Figures cited are the latest available as of September 1991. Sources are listed on page 78.
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America needs a n
fast and effective clea

An alarming lack of progress in cleanup.

When Congress enacted the Federal Superfund program in 1980, the goal was to quickly clean up America's most dangerous hazardous waste sites. Congress and many others assumed there would be only a relatively few such sites and that cleanup costs would be limited.

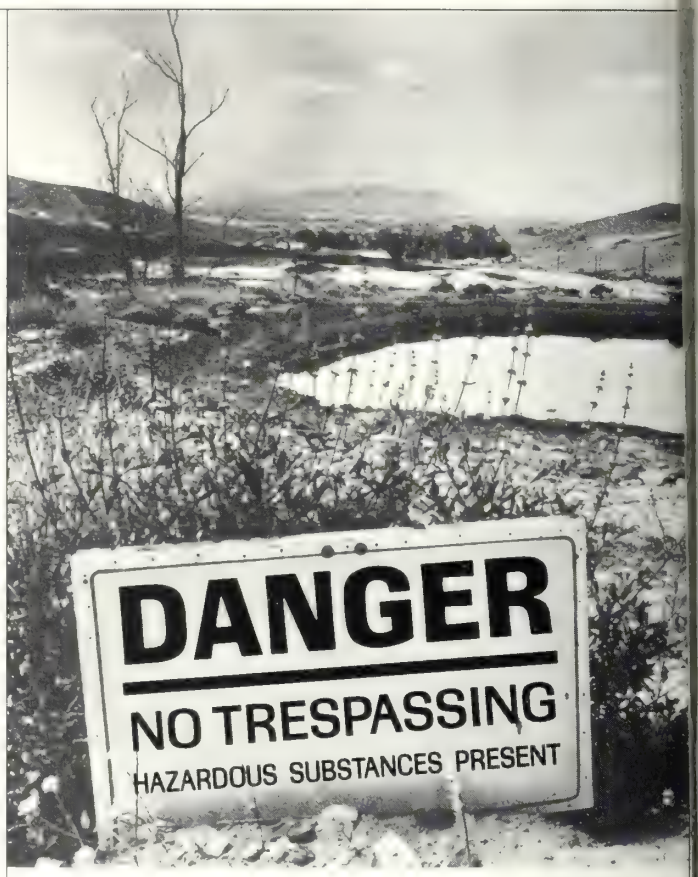
Now, after a decade of trying to make Superfund work, it's clear these assumptions were wrong and that a quick fix was never possible. What's wrong with Superfund and why has so little been accomplished?

The problem is twofold. First, the real scope of our nation's hazardous waste situation is far greater than Congress anticipated. With 1,200 priority sites already identified, growing numbers of sites are being found in every state. The Environmental Protection Agency expects that by the year 2000, there may be as many as 2,000 priority sites.

With rapidly rising cleanup costs, which now average about $25 million per site, the eventual price tag is staggering. According to a top government agency, cleaning up all of America's hazardous waste sites could take from 30 to 60 years and cost up to $500 billion!

A second problem is Superfund's alarming lack of progress in cleanup. A decade and billions of dollars later, fewer than 60 out of the 1,200 sites have actually been cleaned up.

Why? One major reason is Superfund's liability system. It requires that cleanup be paid for by establishing liability–who sent what waste, how much and where–and then negotiating or litigating with those believed to be responsible. While this sounds good in theory, it hasn't worked in practice. Instead, the result has been



delayed cleanup and enormous legal, consulting and other costs unrelated to cleanup.

Compounding the problems instead of solving them.

This is because working out who pays and how much for cleanup is very difficult. Under Superfund, anyone who simply used or owned the site at any time could be liable for the entire cleanup bill. Users can include major corporations, small businesses, local governments, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, even individuals. And it does not matter who caused the harm or whether they did anything wrong. Superfund's retroactive

w system to achieve p of our environment.

liability provision makes parties pay for past actions based on today's standards.

For example, at 422 sites almost 14,000 parties have been notified that they could be liable. In turn, many of them are identifying still others who contributed in some way to the presence of waste at each site. And since Superfund liability deals with past waste disposal, the record of users can go back 25, 30 or even 40 years and can number in the hundreds.

The result? The focus on cleanup has been lost as private and public parties spend years in difficult but unavoidable negotiations and litigation, trying to work out agreements that would provide funds for cleanup. At some sites, more money has been spent resolving complex factual issues than on cleanup itself. This does a lot for lawyers and consultants, but very little for the environment. And of course, these costs are eventually passed on to all of us as consumers in higher prices for goods and services. Isn't it time to stop this wasteful process and get on with cleaning up our environment?

At AIG, we think so. There is little to be gained by arguing over waste disposal that happened long ago. America needs a system that will promote fast and effective cleanup, reduce unnecessary legal fees, spread the cost of cleanup broadly, and encourage responsible waste management practices today.

A PROPOSED SOLUTION: THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST FUND.

To accomplish this, we have proposed creating a National Environmental Trust Fund, similar to the National Highway Trust Fund. Its resources would be used exclusively for cleaning up old hazardous waste sites. Superfund's tough liability provisions would still apply for future pollution, as would all other state and federal environmental laws designed to promote responsible waste management.

One way this fund could be financed would be by adding a separate fee to commercial and industrial insurance premiums in the United States. Even a modest assessment, say 2% of premiums and an equivalent amount for self-insureds, would provide about $40 billion over the next decade - more than enough to clean up the 1,200 highest-priority sites. Without endless time and money spent on legal debates about liability.

A national advisory board consisting of private individuals, industry and public officials could be charged with overseeing the program. We also suggest giving consideration to establishing local technical monitoring committees in each community. These groups of local citizens, representatives of industry and others would work with the Environmental Protection Agency and their own state on the particular cleanup site - from the very beginning of the cleanup effort.

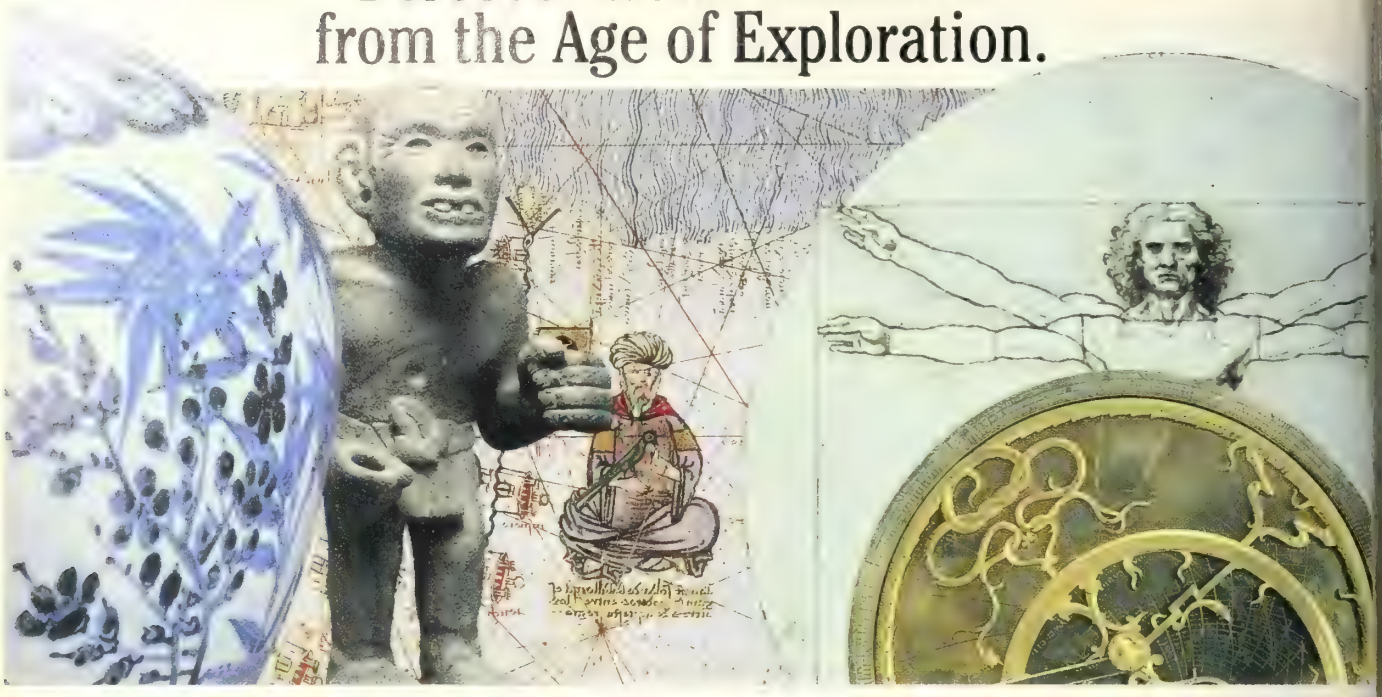
YOU CAN HELP.

We've waited long enough and spent enough money in the courtrooms. Now it's time for action. A cleaner America should be all Americans' shared goal and shared responsibility.

To express your views, or if you would like further information about AIG's proposed National Environmental Trust Fund, write to Mr. M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, American International Group, Inc., 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

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Credits from left to right, details of Blue and White Porcelain Jar with Plum and Bamboo Decorations, Ho-Am Art Museum, Kyunggi-Do, Korea; Xiuhtecuhtli as an Old Man, CNCA-INAH, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City; Atlas Catalan, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice; Astrolabe of Alphanus Severus, Museum fur Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg.

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READINGS

[Essay]

CONSIDER THE CRANK

From "On Cranks," by Carl Pfluger, in the Summer issue of Southwest Review, *a quarterly published at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Pfluger, who is a graduate of Shimer College in Waukegan, Illinois, lives in Connecticut and Quebec.*

A crank is a man possessed by a rampant idea. Yes—"possession," with all its connotations of the demonic, of enslavement to something not entirely human, is the right word. Anyone may have ideas, but a crank's idea has him. His fixation may be on anything at all (though some topics lend themselves more than others to crankery), and it hardly matters whether the idea itself is sound or not, or whether the man possessed is intelligent or stupid. Certainly the majority of cranks, like the majority of us at large, are not particularly bright, but the case of Ezra Pound (to cite only one notorious example) is enough to show that a crank may be intelligent, even brilliant. We recognize a crank not by the content of his thought but by its style.

One way to acquire a sense of the crankish style is by considering the origins and associations of the word itself. I suspect that most people, on hearing a man described as a crank, cannot help making some association with the ubiquitous machine of the same name. We have, after all, so many other mechanical metaphors for mental aberrations—loose screws, crossed wires, going off the rails—and our most common gesture for indicating insanity is to twirl a finger in circles, crank-like, near the side of one's head. This spontaneous association is not entirely wrong—I suggest, in fact, that it expresses a sound instinct, a barely conscious apprehension of the disconcertingly dehumanizing tendency of most crankish endeavor. The etymology of the word, however, is rather more complex and ambiguous, deriving at least as much from the German word *krank*, meaning "sick," as from the obvious mechanical analogies. Were I myself more crankish than I am, I might insist exclusively on one source and one meaning, mechanical or medical; but in fact I prefer to include them both, thereby producing another possible definition: A crank is a sick man who aspires to the condition of a machine.

Cranks are, in general, compulsive explainers. (Gertrude Stein once remarked: "Ezra Pound is a village explainer. All very well if you happen to be a village; but if not, not.") The whole point of clinging to an *idée fixe* is that with it one can explain if not quite the whole world at least a far larger part of it than any legitimately conceived idea can decently cover. And one salient feature of a crankish idea, an earmark of the whole style, is that the idea does not seem to occur naturally; it is not quite organic to the spontaneous processes of human thought but rather is always somehow strained and forced: arbitrary, artificial, even (we can't seem to get away from this, can we?) machine-like. The typical crankish idea tends to be not so much a conception as a contrivance: some method, system, or process which, like the philosopher's stone, is credited with an almost magical power of transformation, and with which the crank believes he can produce the definitive answer to some vexing problem that has defied the best efforts of all previous generations of thinkers, scholars, experimenters, or investigators.

As a rule, cranks may be described as ill-tempered, in both the ancient and modern senses of the word. There is something out of balance in their constitutions: their most characteristic shortcoming is an absence of critical thinking, or of any respect for boundary, limit, or restraint. All think-

ng is to some extent metaphorical, but cranks, more often than most people, fall into the trap of taking their metaphors literally. Their ideas are out of control: They always "go too far" in one direction or another. Thus lacking any sense of proportion, any self-regulating adjustment, their souls are out of tune, devoid of that essential harmony which is the old meaning of temperament. And this discordance of their mental strings gives them a problem of temper in the modern sense too, which manifests itself most clearly when they engage in controversy, as, of course, they always do. No one argues more shrilly, more intemperately, than a crank. Almost invariably one hears in cranks a relentless vilification of critics or opponents, a refusal to recognize the possibility of sincere disagreement, and a claim that all opposition is rooted in a sinister conspiracy to suppress the truth.

Cranks, in defending their mental constructs (and here, curiously, may be their closest approach both to psycho-pathology and to serious scholarship), can be formidable logicians, if not exactly sound reasoners. Most cranks, in fact, see themselves as free-lance scientists, scholars, or investigators: of mechanical problems, assassination conspiracies, the origins of poetry, the destiny of the universe, the meaning of life, the nature of crankery, the fate of man, or the will of God. They share with more orthodox scholars both a professional curiosity and a possessive attitude toward whatever domain of knowledge they have chosen to make their province. They differ from them most crucially in the soundness of their critical faculties. But is this difference really as great, as intrinsic to their personalities, as it first appears? Perhaps professional academics have no greater sense of limit, of proportion, and of really critical intelligence; it may be only the overwhelming weight of all that institutional discipline that keeps the minds of scientists and scholars safely within the straight (and narrow) paths of academic orthodoxy.

So the distinction between cranks and scholars, though useful, should not be pushed too far. Nor should we take all that seriously any attempt to define crankery itself too precisely (what could be more crankish than a taxonomy of crankdom?) or to draw too invidiously sharp a distinction between cranks and the rest of us. Even the mainstream history of critical scientific thought, which one might be inclined to set antithetically against crankery, begins with the wayward musings of a solitary thinker on the fringes of the then civilized world: Thales of Miletus, who seems to have told his astonished contemporaries that "Everything is water"—surely as startlingly bizarre a dictum as any crank since has ventured to make.

Although I have already intimated that some traces of crankishness may be more or less present in everyone at all times, the crank as a distinct and fully fledged personality type appears to be unique to the modern age. Genuine cranks are not only specific to our modern civilization; they are also, in some peculiar sense, especially representative of it. They can exist—or flourish, anyway—only in the social environment made possible by an industrial society. For true crankery to emerge, a society must meet at least three conditions: 1) sufficient discontent with the orthodox authorities to provoke substantial numbers of people into searching for some more satisfying beliefs; 2) sufficient diffusion of education to enable those people to gather, with varying degrees of eclecticism, rationality,

[Letter]

A WORD FOR OLLIE

This letter was sent in July by California Congressman Pete Stark to Oliver North. Stark, a Democrat, was responding to a direct-mail solicitation that North had sent earlier in the summer in which he asked his supporters to sign a petition against Congressman Ron Dellums's appointment to the U.S. House Select Committee on Intelligence and to make a donation to North's Freedom Alliance.

Dear Lieutenant Colonel North:

I have read your pathetic letter in which you refer to Rep. Ron Dellums as an "incredible security risk" and a "very dangerous appointment" to the U.S. House Select Committee on Intelligence.

Frankly, Colonel, you are full of shit.

I find it incredible that anyone who would conspire to sell sophisticated weapons systems to the Ayatollah and the Iranian regime would even consider making such charges. Patriotism requires love of one's country, a willingness to stand up and work for what's right: expanded economic opportunities for all, affordable health care, and an effective, well-managed national defense. Ron has dedicated his entire public-service career to these patriotic ideals.

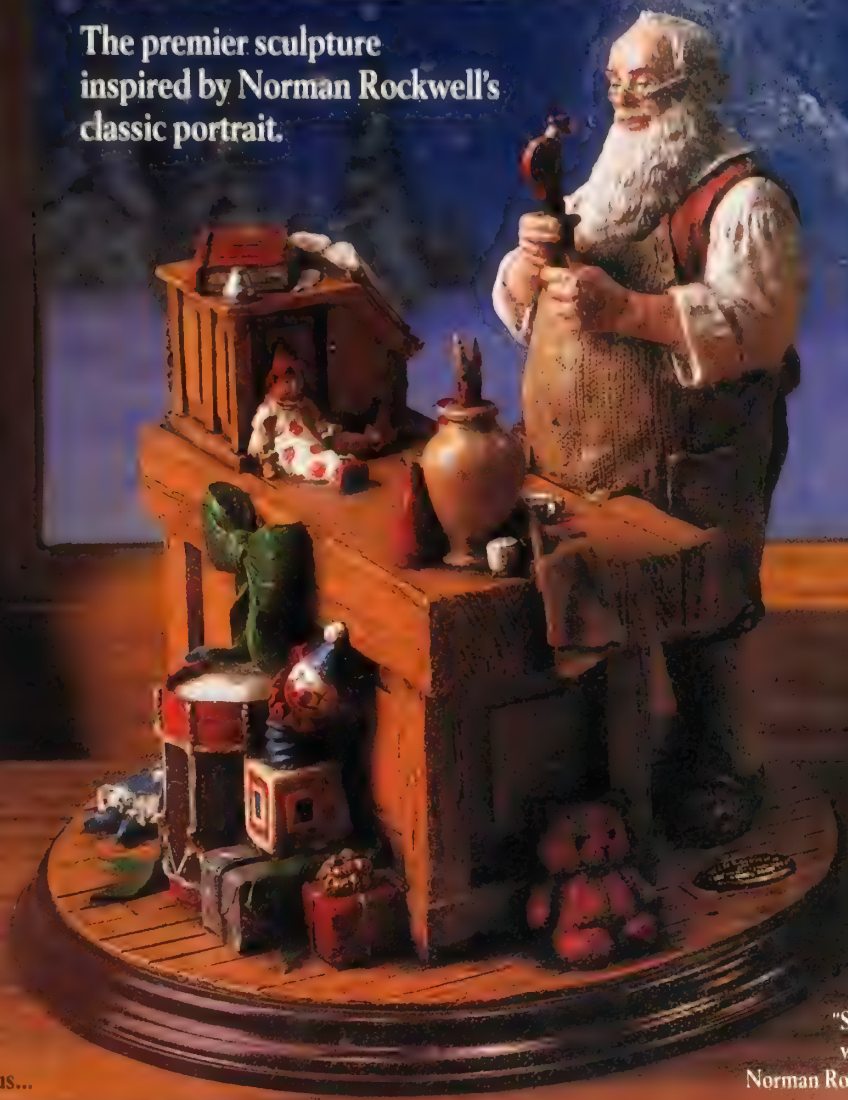
For you to stoop to making such inflammatory, groundless attacks for the purposes of squeezing direct-mail dollars from a vulnerable mailing list is sick and pathetic. You ought to be ashamed.

Sincerely,
Pete Stark, U.S. Congressman

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real plausibility, the materials with which to construct their theories; and 3) sufficient means of propagating their conclusions, thus ensuring that they will not (like any comparably idiosyncratic figures of earlier times) live and die in complete obscurity.

And there is, perhaps, one more feature of modern civilization that is especially conducive to crankery: industrialism itself, and the reductively mechanical view of the world and of man that it promotes. At the highest levels of intellectual culture, this view owes its legitimacy to Isaac Newton (himself a rare example of one who was both fully a genius and fully a crank) and reached its apogee in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Since then, as Newtonian physics has been supplemented, if not supplanted, by less determinist theories (thermodynamics, quantum physics, etc.), such simple-minded reductionism has lost some of its imperious predominance on the theoretical level, but in popular consciousness it remains strong. It is against this background of pervasive materialism that we must understand the recurring motif of mechanical obsessions we keep encountering among cranks. Early on, I proposed the formulation of "a sick man who aspires to the condition of a machine." Perhaps we should now broaden this into a definition of crankery as the sickness of seeing oneself as a machine in a world made up entirely of machines. Cranks, we might say, have taken the clockmaker's universe of early modern physics rather too much to heart, with the result that the cuckoo in the clockwork (if not the ghost in the machine) has rudely popped out to disconcert us all with its compulsive crowing. And so conceiving themselves as machines, it is no surprise that cranks so often seek to reduce thinking itself to a mechanical process. This is the meaning of their rigid systems, their allegedly foolproof methods for generating truth by turning over the most human of faculties to some sort of automatic pilot.

We now live in a time in which uncounted crankish obsessions, sustained by a pervasive but slovenly worldwide network of mass media, flourish all around us simultaneously with the highest level of scientific development yet attained by man. This is something well worth worrying about, no matter how one interprets it. For it suggests either that an alarming number of our contemporaries have gone off the rails, or—far more ominously—that a large part of contemporary reality no longer makes sense to any but a crankish mode of comprehension.

For an extreme instance of a modern reality that strains normal comprehension, and thereby evokes a crankish response, consider Hitler and the lurid haze of fantasy that has gathered about his memory. Of course Hitler himself, with his pseudo-scientific theories of racial biology, his incoherent mixture of mysticism and materialism, and the excruciating style, at once ranting and pedantic, in which he expressed himself, may be identified as a crank in his own right, one might almost say as *the* crank of the twentieth century: a crank gone public in the largest possible sense, his doctrine blown up into a fanaticism of catastrophic dimensions, the very incarnation of a rampant idea let loose on the world. This alone might be enough to make

[Passwords]

ICONS OF THE COMPUTER AGE

From the list of "cultural icons" that the computer program Password Coach prevents users of corporate computer systems from choosing as passwords; the list appeared in an article by Don Steinberg in the Summer issue of Meanwhile..., *a quarterly published in Philadelphia. Password Coach, which was created by Baseline Software in Sausalito, California, is used by companies as a security measure to prevent employees from choosing passwords that might be guessed easily by computer hackers or corporate spies. According to the article, most computer users choose predictable passwords; among the most common are "love" and "sex" as well as "car makes, movie stars, sports teams, and vacation sites."*

Alka-Seltzer
Aristotle
Asimov
AT&T
Beatles
Bonaparte
Brando
Burpee
Chanel
Coors
Confucius
Cosby
DaVinci
Disneyland
Dracula
Frodo
Galileo
Garfield
Godzilla
Goethe
Gorbachev
Hendrix
Hitchcock
Hitler
Jesus
Jetsons
Kirk
Kleenex
LAlaw
Madonna
Mercedes
Milken
Motorola
Nautilus
Nintendo
Pontiac
Scud
Superman
Wheaties
Xerox



"Inflating Spider Man for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, New York, New York, 1988," by David Graham. From Only in America: Some Unexpected Scenery, *a volume of his photographs published by Knopf. A selection of photographs from the book will be on display at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia from November 20 to December 22.*

him almost incomprehensible to normal minds. But even beyond this, and almost as if his delusions possess an unnatural life of their own, Hitler has also become a magnet for crankish theories about him, his motives, and about the whole Nazi movement. Most of these theories seek to relate Hitler to some form or other of preexisting occultism. By associating Hitler with just about every crackpot cult prevalent in the first half of this century, they distance the Nazis from normal humanity by treating them virtually as aliens from another planet. It is all as if, for many people, the reality of Hitler is too painful to confront directly, as if it requires the mediating or trivializing intervention of something like a crank interpretation to make the monstrous reality bearable.

There are even moments (usually in sleepless hours of the night) in which, God help me, I myself have had the feeling that such readings of the Nazi phenomenon are not entirely wrong. Not that I believe, for instance, that the SS in any serious sense can be seen as a necromantic revival of the Teutonic Knights; but that, sometimes, the only way to make sense, at least metaphorically, of such a twisted reality might be by enlisting the aid of a medium equally twisted. There may be times, in other words, when a crank is indeed the most useful guide for understanding another crank. But in a world that is becoming ever more giddy and disorienting, where, if at all, will this process come to an end?

Perhaps we should put the question rather differently. We have identified the essence of crankery as a deficiency of critical thinking or of any sense of limit: Cranks, in their distemper, always go too far. But when the traditional limits in so many spheres of human life and thought have already gone so far toward dissolving, how much meaning can be left even to the distinction between the crankish part of humanity and that part which, we would still like to believe, remains more or less in a sober, critical, and well-tempered balance? It may well be that the "golden age" of well-defined crankery has already passed its peak, together with that highly determinist Newtonian *Weltanschauung* which was essential to its emergence. Our time may be the beginning of its long denouement, as we in our McLuhanized electronic jungle, our post-literate, post-industrial, post-Aquarian, promiscuous-agglutinative New Age, revert to something like the human norm, becoming unreflective and undiscriminating new-primitives in a homogenized global culture increasingly disinclined to make sharp distinctions between sacred and secular, fact and fiction, image and reality, or madness and sanity.

[Prayers]

L.A. CRISES

From a list of calls received last summer by the Los Angeles Fire Department's 911 dispatchers and forwarded to emergency crews for response. In a 1987 incident, a Los Angeles 911 dispatcher received a request for medical assistance from a man whose wife was ill; the dispatcher, who decided that the woman's symptoms did not require emergency treatment, classified the call as a "no-send," meaning that no medical personnel were dispatched. The woman, who was actually suffering cardiac arrest, died. Following a lawsuit by the woman's family, the fire department changed their response policy to eliminate "no-sends"; emergency crews now respond to every call to 911. When this new protocol was adopted, the department asked dispatchers to keep track of calls that would previously have been considered "no-sends." The department receives as many as 400 such calls each month; some examples, taken from the original orders sent by dispatchers to emergency crews, are listed below. The list appeared in the August 4 Los Angeles Times.

Seventeen-year-old female cut foot while trimming calluses.

Eighteen-year-old male can't get any rest at home, wants ride to hospital.

Lady from New York has been drinking, feels ill, spent all her money on jerks.

Man in blue cowboy hat and yellow pants has swollen feet.

Thirteen-year-old stubbed her toe on a stereo speaker.

Sixty-one-year-old woman is worried because her stomach is not growling.

Person answered "No" to question "Are you conscious?"

Person's finger is numb from carrying grocery bags.

Lady has blisters on her feet from working for three days at the Taco Bell.

Splinter in finger.

This guy is inside Humphrey Medical Center. Says the people inside are not helping him fast enough, so he called 911.

Out of breath from "running from the police."

Daughter says mom is acting weird.

Twenty-two-year-old says half of his face is asleep.

Sixty-nine-year-old male needs checkup.

Slept wrong on neck.

Left testicle bigger than right testicle.

Husband claims wife is mentally unstable.

Person has been hiccuping for four days.

[Prayers]

ONWARD CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

From the Summer 1991 "Prayer List for God's Will for Like Minded Prayer Warriors," distributed to members of the San Diego chapter of Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE). The organization, which has 800 chapters nationwide, is committed to "reclaim[ing] our public schools to a Christian morality and elect[ing] Christians to public schoc' boards." In municipal elections in San Diego last year, sixty CEE-backed candidates were elected to various local assemblies, including the school board and the city council.

Pray that new teachers profess Christian values and reject humanistic training.

Pray that all new like-minded candidates gain support and gain wisdom from God.

Pray that the occult, meditation, and hypnotism be seen as dangerous in the schools.

Pray that men step into battle for their families and be the spiritual heads of their homes.

Pray that new candidates be prepared for the next election.

Pray that pro-life views be portrayed as valid in the media.

Pray for God's will for a school superintendent for Santee and South Bay.

Pray for God's will for the future of Tom Payzant and Bill Honig [Payzant, San Diego's superintendent of schools, and Honig, California's superintendent of public instruction, oppose CEE's agenda].

Pray that Planned Parenthood be kept off school grounds in our nation.

Pray that the Republican Party platform be pro-life, with our people in control.

Pray for protection and encouragement for our candidates.

Pray that all school-board members have sufficient time to read and prepare for meetings.

Pray that health textbooks be written with Christian values.

Pray that more members of the media become committed Christians.

Pray for God's will for the agendas of the national PTA and the local NEA [the National Education Association, which the CEE opposes as an "atheist group"].

Pray that the Hoover High School Sex Clinic be stopped.

Pray for donations for our San Diego cause; a used VCR is needed.

Pray that God will raise up a Christian pro-family army in America: strong, wise, committed, prepared, powerful; God victorious!



ABSOLUT EVIDENCE.

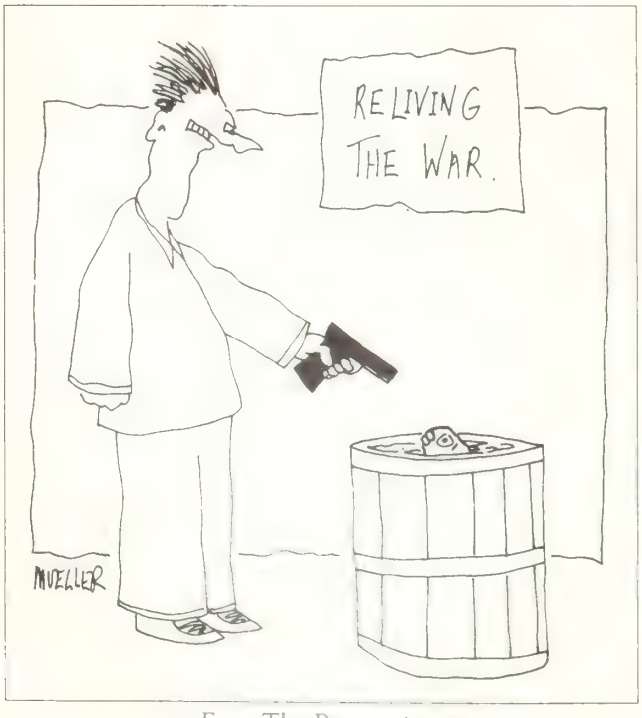
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ation Report]

LIVING IT UP IN ALBANIA

From "Criminal Abuses by Leaders of the Albanian Workers' Party at the Expense of the People and Albania," a report submitted in July to the Albanian People's Assembly by Genc Ruli, the finance minister in Albania's new coalition government. The Albanian Workers' Party ruled the country as a Stalinist dictatorship for forty-five years, first under the leadership of Enver Hoxha and then, following Hoxha's death in 1985, under Ramiz Alia. In the face of popular unrest, Alia began a liberalization campaign in 1990, and in free elections held last March Alia's party retained power. But a series of strikes and demonstrations last spring forced the party to share power with the democratic opposition, and in May the new coalition government began investigating recent abuses by the leaders of the party and their families. Ruli's report was the result of that investigation.

As you are aware, the Council of Ministers [the Albanian cabinet] has strongly condemned the decades-old practice of unscrupulous privileges as illegal and unpatriotic and has decided to denounce and bring before the law the people concerned. This act represents a decisive break between the new law-governed state and the past, when the utterly incompetent and corrupt ruling clique ignored the people's woes and lived at their expense, cynically abusing their trust.



From The Progressive.

In 1956, a government office called the Directorate of Receptions was created in order to serve the life-styles of high-level party officials, who held leading positions in the People's Assembly and the government. This directorate was used mainly in the service of the families of these officials, including their parents, their married children, and other relatives. Let me describe the privileges the families were permitted:

1. The twenty-six families that were cared for were supplied with an unlimited variety of high-quality food products.

During the period between September 1989 and September 1990, when food rationing was in effect for the entire population, the twenty-six families consumed every day an average of 62 kilograms of meat and meat products, 13 liters of oil, 12 1/2 kilograms of cheese, 86 liters of milk, 20 liters of wine and beer, and 54 kilograms of fruit and vegetables.

The highest consumption in this one-year period was recorded by the Hoxha family, which was supplied with about 2,000 kilograms of meat and 700 kilograms of salami, 523 liters of oil, 310 kilograms of butter, 326 liters of brandy and wine, 250 liters of beer, 114 kilograms of olives, almost 100 kilograms of jam and honey, 150 kilograms of hazelnuts, peanuts, and walnuts, and 180 kilograms of coffee.

2. During working meetings, Politburo members and some members of the Central Committee obtained free food every day, to a value of thirty cents per person—seventy cents for Ramiz Alia—for themselves and for every other person present at the meetings. It was typical that thousands of people were invited and that the meetings—for Central Committee plenums, presidium meetings, and so on—were held in the cinema and Ping-Pong hall erected in the compound.

3. Allowances for annual vacations were provided. Politburo members and their spouses were granted $1.25 per day. This sum amounts to $19 per year for each family and for all these families totaled $1,200 in the last three years.

4. Household expenses, including light, water, rent, and heating, were mainly covered by the state. The families paid only 50 percent of their rent and electricity bills and 25 percent of their fuel bills.

5. The Directorate of Receptions covered high telephone bills for calls abroad made by the families. For instance, in 1989 alone, the Hoxha family made 441 calls to Paris at a cost of $19,000; 210 calls to Vienna at a cost of $10,000; 188 calls to Rome; and 38 calls to Milan, Ankara, Budapest, Palermo, Geneva, Berlin, and Stockholm. It is striking that as many as three calls



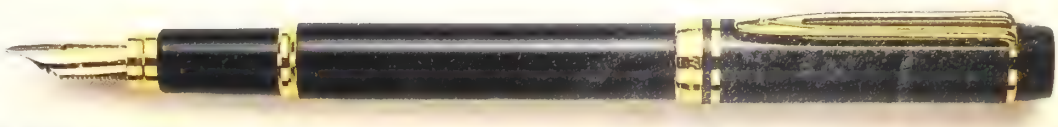
He grew up on beluga caviar and Bizet's Carmen.

He had a champion King Charles spaniel
and a '52 roadster named Wanda.

He had Europe at his feet and the world at his door.

But he never had a Waterman.

How could I have known he had been so deprived.



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PARIS

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"Food and Drink in Germany: Christening on the 'Stauffenburg,'" by Joachim Ellerbrock and Gerhard Schafft. From the Spring Aperture, *a special issue entitled* Between Past and Future: New German Photography.

were made in one day to the same place, and that in some cases they lasted more than one hour. Other families' telephone bills were also extremely high.

6. The Ministry of Health was another source of abuse. The families of high-level officials exploited their position in order to travel abroad at the state's expense, supposedly for treatment. They mainly preferred expensive clinics in Paris, where about $150,000 was spent in the last two years.

Besnik Bekteshi's daughter [Bekteshi was the deputy prime minister under Alia's Communist government] was sent to Vienna for migraine treatment at a cost of $3,400, even though Albanian health officials were opposed to sending her, since we have many migraine specialists and the treatment is the same here as there. Nevertheless, she stayed twenty-one days, not seven as ordered by the ministry.

7. The Presidium of the People's Assembly spent considerable sums on typewriters and office supplies, and especially on color film and photographs of leaders and their families. Rita Marko [under Alia, the deputy chairman of the People's Assembly] spent $240 on color film between 1986 and 1990, and the costs of developing and printing were borne by the party Central Committee.

8. Foreign literature was normally imported by individual order and was normally paid for by the individual concerned. However, there were cases in which the state suffered economically.

Nexhmije Hoxha [the widow of Enver Hoxha] did not pay for her magazine subscriptions, totaling $300 for 1986 through 1989; in 1990 her subscriptions were improperly paid for by the General Council of the Democratic Front.

Muho Asllani [a former member of the Politburo] subscribed to the magazine *France Football* in 1987, 1988, and 1989, but the subscription charges, totaling $260, were improperly paid by party committees.

The disgraceful decades-old practice of undeserved privileges and abuses must be condemned. By sternly denouncing these painful phenomena from the past, the Albanian people and their now-democratic state are demonstrating that this past has come to an end once and for all, and that such things will never be allowed to occur again.

[Letter]

D. A. IKWUWUNNA, POST-COLONIAL CON MAN

From a letter sent in July to a number of American corporate executives, lawyers, and businessmen by "D. A. Ikwuwunna," identified in the letter as an employee of the "Apolodonasom Commercial Company," in Lagos, Nigeria; according to its letterhead the firm is an "Exporter/Importer. . . [specializing in] General Contract Services." The letter solicited the recipients' help in what would appear to be a plan to defraud the Nigerian government of $38,500,000. In an advertisement placed in the financial press in September, the Central Bank of Nigeria claimed that the letter was the work of a "syndicate of international tricksters out to dupe the gullible overseas recipients." According to the bank, the perpetrators have in several cases "succeeded in collecting huge sums of money [from recipients of the letter] for what they often describe as local taxes or levies and expenses to bribe [Nigerian] government officials."

Dear Sir,

We are very happy to associate with your company. We are a firm of business consultants, and recently two of our civil-servant clients approached us to help them negotiate with a foreign partner into whose account a certain amount could be transferred. It is our sincere belief that your firm can be of assistance in facilitating the deal.

The amount in question is $38,500,000 (in U.S. dollars). This money was meant for the payment of outstanding contracts carried out for the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (N.N.P.C.), which controls the nation's oil, and for which our clients work. They are in good arrangement with some top high officers in the Central Bank of Nigeria.

This money was approved for payments in the 1989 budget, but no company came forward to claim it. Those officers undertook an internal investigation and discovered that no job was actually done. Based on the above facts they now decide to negotiate with a foreign firm that they could transfer the money into his bank account.

If you accept my proposal, you are required to send to me, through courier service, the following documents:

1. Two copies of your company letterheadings; signed and stamped.
2. Two copies of pro forma invoices; signed and stamped.
3. The name and address of your bank where the money will be transferred.
4. Your bank account number.
5. Your bank telex and fax numbers.

The above documents will be used for raising payment vouchers and obtaining approvals from the government and the N.N.P.C. They will also be used to register/incorporate your company here in Nigeria.

Your share for providing the account is 20 percent of the total sum, after taxes and some local expenses have been deducted. On receipt of documents, operation takes twenty-two working days for the money to be transferred through telegraphic transfer. Please note that absolute secret is required.

At best, you can urgently visit Lagos, Nigeria, to verify the proposal.

We await your reply.

Best regards,
D. A. Ikwuwunna

[Solicitation Letter]

LEADING POLS TO THE TROUGH

From a letter sent in August to prospective subscribers by Lobbying & Influence Alert, *"the nationwide update on influencing legislation, regulations and policy." A one-year subscription to the monthly newsletter costs $298.*

Dear Colleague:

Let's be honest: If you've got a $21 million lobbying budget backed by an association with 420,000 members, you can command a great deal of attention from elected officials and regulators.

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- ally change your lobbying strategies.
- connection between campaign money and cooperation—and how can you *still* maintain your privileged relationship?
- ulators.
- raising the specter of illegal gift

mistake.

Once you see just one issue of *Lobbying & Influence Alert*, I'm certain you'll be convinced that it supplies knowledge and insight that give you a *powerful advantage* in your day-to-day dealings with legislators and regulators.

Sincerely,
Leslie Norins, Ph.D.
Publisher

[List]

THE WAY WE ARE NOW

From the introduction to America at Century's End, *a collection of sociological essays edited by Alan Wolfe and published by the University of California Press in Berkeley. The list below is drawn from "Seventeen Changes in American Life," a portion of Wolfe's introduction. Wolfe, who is dean of the graduate faculty at the New School for Social Research in New York City, is the author of several books, including* Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation.

1. Population shifts have produced a new demographic profile of the country. Newer regions of the United States, such as the South and West, have achieved economic and political prominence over the older centers of the Eastern Seaboard and Midwest. Moreover, immigration, especially from Latin America and Asia, has also changed the

2. Political changes are concomitant with demographic ones. The New Deal coalition, linking working-class and ethnic votes in the North with the solid South, can no longer automatically win presidential elections. Yet the fact that the

3. We have on the fundamental cultural

sciousness inherited from Great Britain. A Protestant ethic stressing thrift, honesty, hard work, sacrifice, and community service has less cur-

is decreasingly Protestant. While some segments of America have become "more" religious - as witnessed by the rise of fundamentalism in many

that hedonistic utilitarianism has become America's only compelling source of ethical values. Morality in America today is more likely to be



Faith and Intelligence:



Are They Compatible?

Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational. Yet recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From the Ivy League to Vanderbilt to Stanford, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, hedonism, technological utopianism, egotism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, justice, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

The *Times* article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this return to religion, and rightly so. We at the REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." Among other things, we scrutinize the religious dimensions of the great events and issues of the past and present, and probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such diverse giants as St. Francis, Aquinas, Dante, Thomas More, Kierkegaard, Newman, Dostoyevsky, Chesterton, Bonhoeffer, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Niebuhr, Solzhenitsyn, Dorothy Day, C.S. Lewis, Martin Luther King Jr., Flannery O'Connor, Simone Weil, Mother Teresa, Graham Greene, Malcolm Muggeridge, and Pope John Paul II.

A robustly Catholic monthly magazine, we support the teachings of Holy Mother Church — be they doctrinal, sexual, or social — and do so without getting mean or anti-ecumenical about it. Our ecumenism is such that we embrace and engage non-Catholics at the highest common denominator of faith, not the lowest. We've been characterized by George Will as "splendid," by Bernard Cardinal Law as "excellent," by Berkeley's John T. Noonan Jr. as "indispensable," by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful and often cheeky," by Carl F.H. Henry, the eminent evangelical theologian, as "exceedingly well done," and by Christopher Derrick, England's foremost Catholic apologist, as "by far the best Catholic magazine in the English-speaking world."

Those who write for us — Sheldon Vanauken, Robert N. Bellah, John Lukacs, Henri J.M. Nouwen, Avery Dulles, Robert Coles, Richard J. Mouw, Christopher Lasch, Eileen Egan, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Peter Kreeft, and others — express themselves with clarity, verve, style, and heart. We bat around a wide variety of issues and defy easy pigeonholing. We'll keep you on your toes.

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belongs than by the national community to which it belong.

4. Downward mobility seems to be increasing. Energy crises and inflation have dashed the idea of an economy in which growth can be taken for granted, transforming middle-classness from a "natural" condition to a matter of constant struggle. Downward mobility has even begun to reach into the upper middle class, and, as it does, basic assumptions about progress and the good life are changing.

5. Conditions at work have been almost completely transformed. In part this is due to radical changes in American industry: the decline of large manufacturing firms, the reorganization of industries, and the rise of financing techniques such as the leveraged buyout. For the average American worker, especially the unionized worker, the results are dramatic. Twenty-five years ago the stereotypical situation was one in which trade-union-conscious men left home each morning for high-paying factory jobs while their wives stayed at home and raised the children. Now the men no longer belong to a union, no longer work in factories, and no longer receive high pay, while their wives, who now also work (usually in the service sector), earn only enough to bring the family income barely up to what it was, in real dollars, a quarter century ago.

6. The reality of two-career families has changed both family ideology and family practice since the 1950s. In addition to the fact that mothers now work, grandparents no longer live in the vicinity of their grandchildren, and extended kin networks have been eroded by geographical mobility and rising housing prices. Child-care arrangements all but inconceivable a generation ago are being invented from scratch as women and men are forced to negotiate their way around these changes, discovering for themselves patterns that work rather than following textbook formulas that explain what the family is (or ought to be).

7. Children themselves have become contested terrain. America has long thought of itself as a child-oriented culture, but hair-raising stories of sexual abuse, poor schools, latchkey kids, and an inadequate child-care system suggest otherwise. At the same time that we celebrate the innocence of childhood, we deprive children of the opportunity just to be children.

8. Housing for most families has also changed radically. There may have been no more important piece of domestic legislation in postwar America than the Housing Act of 1949, which symbolically linked home ownership with democratic ideology. Now there are more renters, more people homeless, more foreclosures, and more young people unable to accumulate a down payment. No one knows the implications of these changes. The recent crisis in real estate has begun to make homes affordable once more. Yet even "affordable" houses take so much of the typical young family's income that the home can no longer be viewed as a protection against the marketplace; it has instead come to symbolize the family's largest investment in the market.

9. The transformation of the American economy and its changing relationship to the world economy has forced Americans to confront unprecedented questions, such as whether local communities should welcome foreign investment, put controls on growth, or attempt to regulate the quality of life in their regions. When American-based corporations are increasingly multinational while foreign-based corporations create jobs for Americans, whose economic success should Americans cheer? Just as Europe is becoming increasingly integrated, both politically and economically, the United States appears to be breaking into two economies: one inward-looking and protectionist, the other global and expansionist.

10. There can be no question that Americans have withdrawn their attention from social problems at home. The notion that a national problem can be identified, that funds can be mobilized to address it, and that a solution to the problem can be found—the assumptions characteristic of the Kennedy-Johnson years—no longer prevails in American domestic life. This change is deeper than a shift from reform to conservatism, from Democrats to Republicans. It represents a

[Announcement]

HARVARD'S NEW COLORS

From an announcement by the Harvard Divinity School's Recycling Coordinator in the February 16–22 issue of The Nave, *the school's weekly newsletter. Soon after the notice was published, the school's paper-recycling bins were relabeled "bleached paper" and "dyed paper."*

Someone changed the recycling sign in Rock entryway from "colored paper" to "paper of color." If this was meant as a joke, I don't think it's funny. If it was done because of a legitimate concern about language usage, please let me know by leaving a note in my mailbox.

—Ellen Jennings, Recycling Coordinator

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[illegible] a spirit of can-do optimism that has characterized American life since the early nineteenth century. The willingness to tackle problems such as AIDS, homelessness, illiteracy, and drugs is hamstrung by a reluctance to raise the taxes that would make new policies possible. To the degree that these issues involve race (and they do in public perception, if not in reality) they highlight a mood among some Americans that questions whether racial harmony is possible in the United States, and, consequently, whether it remains possible to speak of a single American experience.

11. In the past decade, social changes have been reinforced by important technological changes. As a result of the personal computer, modem, and fax machine, working at home is now easier. Cottage industries are returning as highway congestion makes traveling to work increasingly onerous. Flexible working patterns, in turn, will have consequences for families and communities. These new technologies and patterns of allocating time will combine to change how people work, how they spend their leisure time, and how they shift from one to the other.

12. With the passing of traditional concepts of community, Americans are creating new subcommunities. The elderly, living longer than ever before, exemplify this development, concentrating (when they have the means) in specific regions and supporting specific industries that cater to their needs. But retirement communities are only one example of the general trend: Urban gentrification, increasing segregation by class, and the development of "high-tech" subeconomies—Silicon Valley and all its spin-offs—all represent living patterns that come closer to Durkheim's definition of traditional society based on likeness than toward his concept of modern society based on a complex division of labor. The tremendous diversity of America at the national level is now matched by an emphasis on homogeneity at the local level.

13. Although they like to think of themselves as neighborly, Americans increasingly resort to ways of resolving their disputes that are more formal than friendly. The increasing litigiousness of American society, the new role of insurance companies as makers of public policy, the formalization of trust, the increasing use of binding arbitration, the increasing privatization of government services all represent steps away from a community based on kinship within a common tradition (Gemeinschaft) toward one based on impersonal social contracts (Gesellschaft). Yet it would be foolish to lament these changes: Even as they wax nostalgic for a community thought to be lost, Americans take steps to ensure their rights, realize their self-interests, and protect themselves against what they perceive to be the intrusive claims of community. The net result is a change in the texture of everyday life, one felt in places as diverse as the physician's waiting room, the courtroom, the local prison, and the suburban shopping mall.

14. No one seems to obey the rules anymore. This is a reflection of the fact that new ethical issues have arisen that have rendered traditional rules inadequate as a guide for conduct: Surrogate mothering, computer hacking, organ transplants, the prolongation of life, corporate crime, abortion, and AIDS are only some of the examples. It is as if the United States is caught between two moral codes: One no longer applies, and the other has not yet been developed.

We are, it seems, no longer the society we once were, but neither are we the society we had hoped to be. As we approach the century's end, something new is emerging helter-skelter in our midst that bears little resemblance to any existing political, theological, or sociological model of how the world is supposed to work. These emerging patterns may constitute the prelude to a new order that we will eventually come to view as normal, or it may be a period of disorder that will usher in ever greater disorder; at this point, it is impossible to know.

[Exegesis]

HEAVY-METAL THEOLOGY

The following comment by Duff McKagan, the bassist for the rock band Guns n' Roses, appeared in a profile of the band in the September 5 Rolling Stone.

"I think the Bible's a good story, you know? I mean, Jesus was—back in those times, the Romans were just squashing everybody, and here came this guy who had positive thoughts. I think that's all there was to it. And he turned all these people on to all these positive thoughts. All of a sudden all the people were going, '*This* guy's fucking *groovy*.' And the Romans were like, 'Not *that* groovy, because he's fucking taking over all of our people we're squashing, so we're gonna kill him.' He was just a positive guy who wanted to spread love and goodness. And the Romans did not dig that. And they fucking squashed him like a *grape*."

[Essay]

THE OBJECTS OF CHILDHOOD

From an afterword by John Updike to The First Picture Book: Everyday Things for Babies, *a book of photographs of objects "first met by any baby of today." The book, by Edward Steichen, with a preface by Mary Steichen Calderone, his daughter, was originally published in 1930 and will be reissued in a limited edition this month by the Library Fellows of the Whitney Museum in New York City. Updike's most recent novel is* Rabbit at Rest.

"Behold the child among his new-born blisses," Wordsworth advises in the famous ode subtitled "Intimations of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood." The poet puts forward a considerably developed metaphysical explanation for the incomparable vividness and mysterious power of our first impressions:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

The clouds of glory dissipate, yet tendrils cling, leaving the adult mind "Haunted for ever by the eternal mind" and by "High instincts before which our mortal nature/Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised." We remain troubled and guided by

> those first affections,
> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
> Are yet a master-light of all our seeing.

Sifting through my recently dead mother's possessions, I encountered more than one object—a chunky magnifying glass, a small copper ashtray still darkened by my father's cigarette ashes, a thick pale-green ceramic candlestick, its handles akimbo like an angry woman's arms—that reawakened in my nervous system an infantile sense of largeness, of a numbly grasped ominousness, like statues of gods viewed in smoky caves. Items of inexpensive mass manufacture, they had been left behind by the evolutions of style and of the manufacturing economy. Their old-fashionedness related to the Thirties and the Forties, decades entirely historical to most of the world's living population but as intimately real to me, a man not yet old, as my own pillow. The era's substances—the kitchen tables covered in oilcloth, the slate sinks, the wooden iceboxes, the square soaps, the toys of real rubber and lead—cradled my growing awareness and formed material expectations that modern plastics and brittle "white metal" inevitably disappoint; the evidence of my senses proposes, over a lifetime, a world increasingly lightweight, odorless, gimcrack, and flimsy, where grotesquely inflated money is traded for pathetically shoddy goods. Real fur was guiltlessly abundant in that primitive world of the Thirties, and one of my mother's old coats, found at the back of a closet, unworn for decades, was trimmed with a collar of red-brown fox fur, each hair tipped with black. I stared at the texture, wondering why it spoke to me so strongly, in the smoky cave of lost time, and realized that this fur had been habitually close to my face, its details pressed sharply into my passive infant awareness. My mother, not dead but alive and young and fashionable, was carrying me against her shoulder.

The basic equipment of life is quite conservative in design, and of these objects photographed by Edward Steichen in 1930, two years before my birth, few will be utterly strange to a child of today. He has captured the primal frontality and awesome scale of those simple things that dawn, so metaphysically laden with word-



EDWARD STEICHEN, *Untitled (Teddy Bear)*, 1929–1930

less meaning, upon the child's consciousness. The teddy bear, for example, is a bit more disheveled in its fur, and probably harder in its body, than the boneless Dacron-furred contem-



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teddies, which seem designed more as pillows than as sturdy companions for a child. My bear, almost exactly like this one, with tawny blond hair and limbs that moved on stiffish little swivels, was called Bruno. His two-tone brown eyes came out on long pins like hatpins, and one of them got lost, so he was disturbingly one-eyed. Cruelly, tenderly, I would remove his surviving eye, study his blind blond socket, and then with a lordly compassion reinsert the bright hatpin, restoring helpless Bruno's sight.

These first toys stand in relation to the child's power and size as he does to that of adults, and just as adult behavior seems sometimes arbitrarily punishing, so is his; I wince to think of the inchoate anger inflicted upon dear docile Bruno, and upon a rubber Donald Duck whose throat I experimentally slit with a razor, halfway through, and upon a rubber Mickey Mouse whose head, with a little distorting squeeze, came altogether off and could be reinstalled upon a small flanged collar between his shoulders. We rehearse with our toys our eventual relations with people. George Eliot, in describing, in *Middlemarch*, her heroine's unfortunate marriage, particularizes Mr. Casaubon's unwittingly cold rejection of "those childlike caresses which are the bent of every sweet woman, who has begun by showering kisses on the hard pate of her bald doll, creating a happy soul within that woodenness from the wealth of her own love."

If the nineteenth century tended to picture the very young as fountains of kisses, still steeped in the liquids of heaven, the twentieth has taken a darker, more sardonic view: W. H. Auden's poem "Mundus et Infans," meditating upon a male baby, sees a "cocky little ogre" who is "Resolved, cost what it may, to seize supreme power" and who has not yet learned "to distinguish/Between hunger and love." At the birth of his little cosmos, as at the birth of the larger, there is a primal seethe of undifferentiated force:

> A pantheist not a solipsist, he co-operates
> With a universe of large and noisy feeling-states
> Without troubling to place
> Them anywhere special, for, to his eyes, Funnyface
> Or Elephant as yet
> Mean nothing. His distinction between Me and Us
> Is a matter of taste; his seasons are Dry and Wet;
> He thinks as his mouth does.

Destruction, aggression, and investigation are hard to distinguish in an infant's gropings toward reality. Recently I watched my youngest grandson cope with a present I had given him for his first birthday. It was a set of French bells mounted in a circle that could be spun, the bells colored like a rainbow and numbered so that tunes could be picked out with the mallet provided. Pealing glissandos could be produced by spinning the circle and letting the mallet caress the bells as they flashed by, their rainbow merged into a glittering gray. A toy, certainly, to appeal to a Francophile grandfather of arrested musical development. The one-year-old quickly discovered that the bells, struck with a fisted mallet, responded with a noise, and that his towering audience of parental figures approved. Very intelligently, I thought, he figured out that the full circular set, struck glancingly by his hand, would spin, but that when the toy lay upside down on the floor the same effect was impossible to produce. His attempt to imitate the glissando we demonstrated was frustrated by his inability to hold the mallet lightly enough. His further experiments were so hard to distinguish from a de-

[Brochure]

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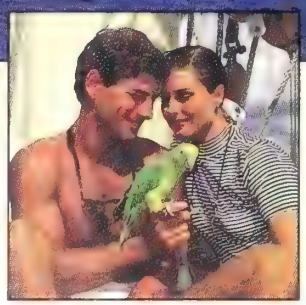
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Larry Linville
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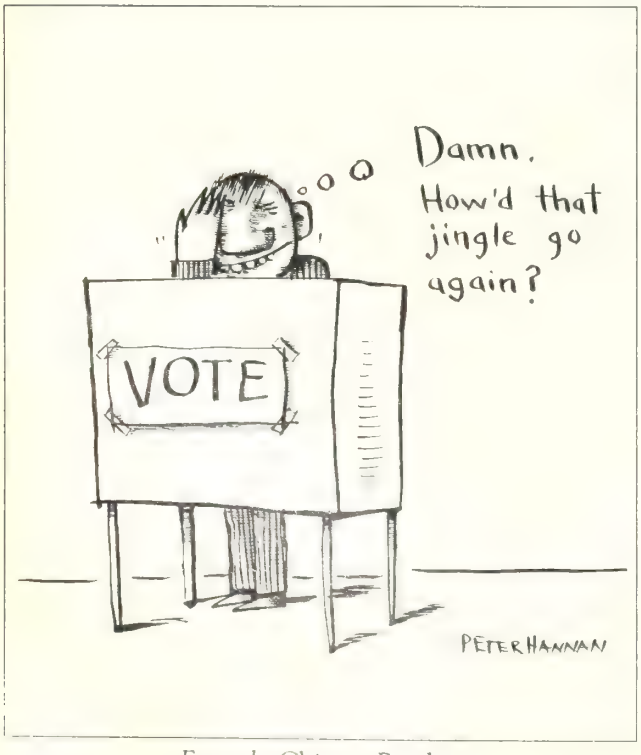
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.ve assault that we temporarily separated the , and t[illegible]y.

The ageless charm of blocks, surely, is their susceptibility to being knocked down and reassembled, their unblaming accommodation of those cycles of construction and deconstruction whereby the young child expresses his ambivalence toward the world that so imposingly surrounds him. His or her impulse to kiss the doll's bald pate has a companion itch to kill, to remove irritating obstacles from a horizon crowded with frustrations and challenges. Among the striking qualities of Steichen's solemn photographs of common things is their menace—the giant-faced alarm clock, the bed like a cage, the one-armed black telephone, the sharp-edged blocks in their military order, the hot-water faucet with its scalding long nose. In the first house I lived in, up to the age of thirteen, the bathroom—its stains, its nether-connected plumbing—frightened me. To a very young child, a home holds cheerful, sunlit patches and pockets of mystery and magic. The area around our upright piano, for instance, in its little, seldom-visited "piano room," was charged with a sinister electricity for me, even before the painful lessons and music books, the big flat books haunted by spidery images of Mozart with his white pigtail and Mussorgsky with his bleary hangdog eyes. On top of the piano lay a nest of curiosities—a faded red runner of mazy Oriental design, a chocolate-brown metal box containing unreadable and momentous documents, and a little brass tiger, its stripes incised, its mouth snarling, and the underside stamped simply CHINA. All these are now in my possession and have not totally lost their cloudy old largeness and potence, their fuzz of significance. Through their curious quiddity, my own existence—its final unknowableness, its mortality—began to gather specifics.



From the Chicago Reader.

[Story]

ONE THOUSAND WORDS ON WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TALK DURING A FIRE DRILL

By Mark Halliday. From the 1991–92 edition of The Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses, *edited by Bill Henderson and published by the Pushcart Press. This story originally appeared in* The North American Review. *Halliday teaches high school in Wilmington, Delaware. A volume of his poetry,* Tasker Street, *will be published next spring.*

First of all, I should point out that the topic of why you should not talk during a fire drill is such a large and complex topic that I cannot do full justice to it in only one thousand words. In only one thousand words I will only be able to scratch the surface of this very interesting topic which has so many important and sensitive aspects. There certainly is a great deal to be said about why a person should not talk during a fire drill, even when everybody knows it is just a drill and even if there is not a teacher talking to us at the time.

One outstanding reason for not talking during a fire drill is because the fire drill is a practice session for when there might be a real fire, in which case all the students would certainly need to be very quiet so they could hear the instructions from teachers such as Mrs. DeMella who would be shouting out some important messages. She might be shouting about how we should stand in alphabetical order on the ballfield with the ninth grade closest to the flagpole. If you are talking when Mrs. DeMella shouts about this then you might not hear the instructions and possibly, with the black smoke billowing out the windows of the burning school, if this was a real fire and not just another drill, you might then become confused and forget where to stand, even though the whole school has practiced this entire thing

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[illegible] thousand times, because at such a time [illegible] brain could become overheated and you might run in circles like an insane dog. For this reason you would fail to stand in exactly the place where Mrs. DeMella wanted you to stand, in which case the teachers might count the students and come to the mistaken conclusion that you were absent and that you were roasting in the flames, running around trapped in the burning gym like a human torch, and as a result Mrs. DeMella might go insane with grief about her lost student, thinking that she should have shouted even louder about where everybody should walk and stand, all because you were selfish and kept on talking to your neighbor.

In a sense the above explanation reveals very much of the essence of why a person should not ever talk during a fire drill, but of course there are further aspects of this interesting topic which can be explained and which will be explained. The concept of not talking during a fire drill is closely related to the concept of silence and to the concept of the value of silence or what we call quiet. In a quiet situation there is a great opportunity for people to hear what someone else may have to say, such as your teacher. In a sense this is the same idea as was studied in the preceding paragraph but there is definitely more to be said about silence or quiet or what we may call the absence of sound. Silence is a situation which gives us the chance to rest our ears and our minds, which are so busy during most of the day listening to words, words, words, and other noises, like the squeak of chalk on a blackboard (which is actually a green board) or Mr. Perkins clearing his throat, which seems to involve a remarkable amount of phlegm or mucus or what have you. After a few hours of hearing so many sounds, some of which are remarkably unpleasant, not to mention the voices of our teachers helping us to understand the Constitution and the methods for determining whether two triangles are congruent (side-angle-side, angle-side-angle, and side-side-side) (but not angle-angle-angle), there is a need for silence, or quiet, and it is a very human need. Thus if a student is talking during a fire drill, that student is ruining a golden opportunity to experience silence, because after all a fire drill is a time when silence is golden, and mandatory, except of course for a teacher such as Mrs. DeMella who has the job of shouting instructions to everybody very loudly just in case someone may have forgotten the fire drill procedure from the last fire drill which took place one month ago.

At this point the important issue of why you should absolutely not talk during a fire drill has certainly been clarified in more than one way. However, there is no doubt in my mind that more can be said on this issue which has fascinated the minds of various thinkers since mankind became civilized and outgrew the habits of apes and related primates. If a tribe of monkeys were to participate in a fire drill they would probably go right on chattering and scratching their armpits and hopping on one another no matter what Mrs. DeMella said, and this would be terribly upsetting for her and the other teachers because the high noise level would make them think all the monkeys would get burned to a crisp in the event of a real fire. But fortunately, thanks to Charles Darwin and his assistants, mankind has evolved and has discovered the concept of self-control which is very beautiful. Surely we can feel proud of the human species when we see the entire ninth grade standing in alphabetical rows by the flagpole with nobody saying a single word, standing there in a condition of total and complete silence and pretending that something important is going on even when everybody knows there is no fire and we could all do the entire drill in our sleep.

In conclusion, possibly a few words should be said on the question of why a person might make the mistake of talking during a fire drill. Here is an example. Bryce Carter grabbed my Screaming Blue Messiahs tape and I had to get it back fast before he wrecked it. ■

[Classified Ad]

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MIXED BLOOD

Columbus's legacy: A world made *mestizo*

By Richard Rodriguez

I used to stare at the Indian in the mirror. The wide nostrils, the thick lips. Starring Paul Muni as Benito Juárez. Such a long face—such a long nose—sculpted by indifferent, blunt thumbs, and of such common clay. No one in my family had a face as dark or as Indian as mine. My face could not portray the ambition I brought to it. What could the United States of America say to me? I remember reading the ponderous conclusion of the Kerner Report in the Sixties: two Americas, one white, one black—the prophecy of an eclipse too simple to account for the complexity of my face.

Mestizo in Mexican Spanish means mixed, confused. Clotted with Indian, thinned by Spanish spume.

What could Mexico say to me?

Mexican philosophers powwow in their tony journals about Indian "fatalism" and "Whither Mexico?" *El fatalismo del indio* is an important Mexican philosophical theme; the phrase is trusted to conjure the quality of Indian passivity as well as to initiate debate about Mexico's reluctant progress toward modernization. Mexicans imagine their Indian part as dead weight: the Indian stunned by modernity, so overwhelmed by the loss of what is genuine to him—his language, his religion—that he sits weeping like a medieval lady at the crossroads; or else he resorts to occult powers and superstitions, choosing to consort with death because the purpose of the world has passed him by.

One night in Mexico City I ventured far from my hotel to a distant *colonia* to visit my aunt, my father's only sister. But she was not there. She had moved. For the past several years she has moved, this woman of eighty-odd years, from one of her children to another. She takes with her only her papers and books—she is a poetess—and an upright piano painted blue. My aunt writes love poems to her dead husband, Juan—keeping Juan up to date while watering her loss. Last year she sent me her *obras completas*, an

Richard Rodriguez is an editor at Pacific News Service in San Francisco. His new book, Mexico's Children, *will be published next year by Viking. "Late Victorians," Rodriguez's last article for* Harper's Magazine, *appeared in the October 1990 issue*

KELEY ONE DAY, AN
ATE APPROACHED
A STONE TOTEM,
AY, "GOD, IT MUST BE COOL
TO BE RELATED TO AZTECS"

inch-thick block of bound onionskin. And with her poems she sent me a list of names, a genealogy braiding two centuries, two continents, to a common origin: eighteenth-century Salamanca. No explanation is attached to the list. Its implication is nonetheless clear: We are—my father's family is (despite the evidence of my face)—of Europe. We are not Indian.

On the other hand, at Berkeley, an undergraduate approached me cautiously one day, as if I were a stone totem, to say, "God, it must be cool to be related to Aztecs."

I sat down next to the journalist from Pakistan—the guest of honor. He had been making a tour of the United States under the auspices of the U.S. State Department. Nearing the end of his journey now, he was having dinner with several of us, American journalists, at a Chinese restaurant in San Francisco. He said he'd seen pretty much all he wanted to see in America. His wife, however, had asked him to bring back some Indian handicrafts. Blankets. Beaded stuff. He'd looked everywhere.

The table was momentarily captured by the novelty of his dilemma. You can't touch the stuff nowadays, somebody said. So rare, so expensive. Somebody else knew of a shop up on Sacramento Street that sells authentic Santa Fe. Several others remembered a store in Chinatown where moccasins, belts—"the works"—were to be found. All manufactured in Taiwan.

The Pakistani journalist looked incredulous. His dream of America had been shaped by American-export Westerns. Cowboys and Indians are the yin and yang of America. He had seen men dressed like cowboys on this trip.

But (turning to me), Where are the Indians?

(Two Indians staring at each other. One asks where are all the Indians, the other shrugs.)

I grew up in Sacramento thinking of Indians as people who had disappeared. I was a Mexican in California; I would no more have thought of myself as an Aztec than you might imagine yourself a Viking or a Bantu. Mrs. Ferrucci up the block used to call us "Spanish." We knew she intended to ennoble us by that designation. We also knew she was ignorant.

I was ignorant.

In America, the Indian is relegated to the obligatory first chapter—the Once Great Nation chapter—after which the Indian is cleared away as easily as brush, using a very sharp rhetorical tool called an "alas." Thereafter, the Indian reappears only as a stunned remnant—Ishi, or the hundred-year-old hag blowing out her birthday candle at a rest home in Tucson, or the teenager drunk on his ass in the park.

Here they come down Broadway in the Fourth of July parades of my childhood—middle-aged men wearing glasses, beating their tom-toms; *hey-ya-ya-yah; hey-ya-ya-yah.* They wore Bermuda shorts under their loincloths. High school kids could never refrain from the answering *woo-woo-woo*, stopping their mouths with the palms of their hands.

In the 1960s, Indians began to name themselves Native Americans, recalling themselves to life. That self-designation underestimated the ruthless idea Puritans had superimposed upon the landscape. America is an idea to which natives are inimical. The Indian represented permanence and continuity to Americans who were determined to call this country new. Indians must be ghosts.

I collected conflicting evidence concerning Mexico, it's true, but I never felt myself the remnant of anything. Mexican magazines arrived in our mailbox from Mexico City, showed pedestrians strolling wide ocher boulevards beneath trees with lime-green leaves. My past was at least this coherent: Mexico was a real place with plenty of people walking around in it. My parents had come from somewhere that went on without them.

When I was a graduate student at Berkeley, teaching remedial English, there were a few American Indians in my classroom. They were unlike any other "minority students" in the classes I taught. The Indians drifted in and

out. When I summoned them to my office, they came and sat while I did all the talking.

I remember one tall man particularly, a near-somnambulist, beautiful in an off-putting way, but interesting too, because I never saw him without the current issue of *The New York Review of Books* under his arm, which I took as an advertisement of ambition. He eschewed my class for weeks at a time. Then, one morning, I saw him in a café on Telegraph Avenue across from Cody's. I did not fancy myself Sidney Poitier, but I was interested in this moody brave's lack of interest in me, for one, and then *The New York Review of Books*.

Do you mind if I sit here?

Nothing.

Blah. Blah. Blah. . . *N.Y.R.B.*?—entirely on my part—until, when I got up to leave:

You're not Indian, you're Mexican. You wouldn't understand.

He meant I was cut. Diluted.

Understand what?

He meant I was not an Indian in America. He meant he was an enemy of the history that had otherwise created me. And he was right, I didn't understand. I took his diffidence for chauvinism. I read his chauvinism as arrogance. He didn't see the Indian in my face? I saw his face—his refusal to consort with the living—as the face of a dead man.

As the landscape goes, so goes the Indian? In the public-service TV commercial the Indian sheds a tear at the sight of an America polluted beyond his recognition. Indian memory has become the measure against which America gauges corrupting history when it suits us. Gitchigoomeism—the habit of placing the Indian outside history—is a white sentimentality that relegates the Indian to death.

An obituary from the *New York Times* (September 1989, dateline Alaska): An oil freighter has spilled its load along the Alaskan coast. There is a billion-dollar cleanup, bringing jobs and dollars to Indian villages. "The modern world has been closing in on English Bay . . . with glacial slowness. The oil spill and the resulting sea of money have accelerated the process, so that English Bay now seems caught on the cusp of history."

The omniscient reporter from the *New York Times* takes it upon himself to regret history on behalf of the Indians. "Instead of hanging salmon to dry this month, as Aleut natives have done for centuries . . . John Kvasnikoff was putting up a three thousand dollar television satellite dish on the bluff next to his home above the sea."

The reporter from the *New York Times* knows the price modernity will exact from an Indian who wants to plug himself in. Mind you, the reporter is confident of his own role in history, his freedom to lug a word processor to some remote Alaskan village. About the reporter's journey, the *Times* is not censorious. But let the Indian drop one bead from custom, or let his son straddle a snowmobile—as he does in the photo accompanying the article—and the *New York Times* cries *boo-hoo-hoo yah-yah-yah*.

Thus does the Indian become the mascot of an international ecology movement. The industrial countries of the world romanticize the Indian who no longer exists, ignoring the Indian who does—the Indian who is poised to chop down his rain forest, for example. Or the Indian who reads the *New York Times*.

Once more in San Francisco: I flattered myself that the woman staring at me all evening "knew my work." I considered myself an active agent, in other words. But after several passes around the buffet, the woman cornered me to say she recognized me as an "ancient soul."

Do I lure or am I just minding my own business?

Is it in the nature of Indians—not verifiable in nature, of course, but in the European description of Indians—that we wait around to be "discovered"?

Europe discovers. India beckons. Isn't that so? India sits atop her lily pad through centuries, lost in contemplation of the horizon. And from time to

THE INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD ROMANTICIZE THE INDIAN WHO NO LONGER EXISTS, IGNORING THE INDIAN WHO DOES

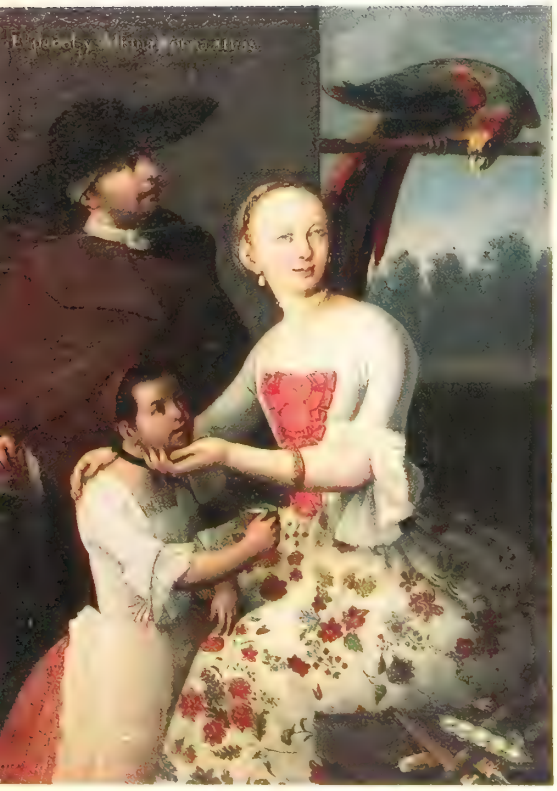


"Spanish father and Indian mother, Mestisa"

This and the following two paintings are part of a series on the theme of mestizaje *(mixed-blood heritage) by the mestizo Mexican painter Miguel Cabrera (1695–1768).*

Paintings courtesy the Metropolitan Museum of Art

FILLED WITH THE ARROGANCE OF DISCOVERY, THE EUROPEANS WERE NOT PREDISPOSED TO IMAGINE THAT THEY WERE BEING WATCHED, AWAITED



"Spanish father and Octoroon mother, Throwback"

time India is discovered.

In the fifteenth century, sailing Spaniards were acting according to scientific conjecture as to the nature and as to the shape of the world. Most thinking men in Europe at the time of Columbus believed the world to be round. The voyage of Columbus was the test of a theory believed to be true. Brave, yes, but pedantic, therefore.

The Indian is forever implicated in the roundness of the world. America was the false India, the mistaken India, and yet the veritable India for all that. India—the clasp, the coupling mystery at the end of quest.

This is as true today as of yore. Where do the Beatles go when the world is too much with them? Where does Jerry Brown seek the fat farm of his soul? India, man, India!

India waits.

India has all the answers beneath her passive face or behind her veil or between her legs. The European has only questions, questions that are assertions turned inside out.

According to the European version—the stag version—of the pageant of the New World, the Indian plays a passive role. Europe has been accustomed to playing the swaggart in history—Europe striding through the Americas, overturning temples, spilling language, spilling seed, spilling blood.

And wasn't the Indian the female, the passive, the waiting aspect to the theorem—lewd and promiscuous in her embrace as she is indolent betimes? In European museums, she is idle, recumbent at the base of a silver pineapple tree or the pedestal of the Dresden urn or the Sèvres tureen—the muse of European adventure, at once wanderlust and bounty.

In Western civilization histories, the little honeymoon joke Europe tells on itself is of mistaking America for the extremities of India. But India was perhaps not so much a misnomer as was "discoverer" or "conquistador."

Many tribes of Indians were prescient enough, preserved memory enough, or were lonesome enough to predict the coming of a pale stranger from across the sea, a messianic twin of completing memory or skill.

None of this could the watery Europeans have known as they marveled at the sight of approaching land. Filled with the arrogance of discovery, the Europeans were not predisposed to imagine that they were being watched, awaited.

But the world was round. The entrance into the Indies was a reunion of peoples. The Indian awaited the long-separated European, the inevitable European, as the approaching horizon.

A friend of mine at Cambridge loses patience whenever I describe my face as *mestizo*. Look at my face. What do you see?

An Indian, he says.

Mestizo, I correct.

Mestizo, mestizo, he says.

Listen, he says. I went back to my mother's village in Mexico last summer and there was nothing *mestizo* about it. Dust, dogs, and Indians. People there don't even speak Spanish.

So I ask my friend at Cambridge what it means to him to be an Indian.

He hesitates. My friend has recently been taken up as amusing by a bunch of rich Pakistanis in London. But, facing me, he is vexed and in earnest. He describes a lonely search among his family for evidence of Indianness. He thinks he has found it in his mother, watching his mother in her garden.

Does she plant corn by the light of the moon?

She seems to have some relationship with the earth, he says quietly.

So there it is. The mystical tie to nature. How else to think of the Indian except in terms of some druidical green thumb? No one says of an English matron in her rose garden that she is behaving like a Celt. Because the Indian has no history—that is, because history books are the province of the descendants of Europeans—the Indian seems to belong only to the party of

he first part, the first chapter. So that is where the son expects to find his nother, Daughter of the Moon.

Let's talk about something else. Let's talk about London. The last time I was in London I was walking toward an early evening at the Queen's Theatre when I passed that Christopher Wren church near Fortnum & Mason. The church was lit. I decided to stop, to savor the spectacle of what I expected would be a few Pymish men and women rolled into balls of fur at evensong. Imagine my surprise that the congregation was young—dressed in army fatigues and Laura Ashley. Within the chancel, cross-legged on a dais, was a South American shaman.

Now, who is the truer Indian in this picture? Me . . . me on my way to the Queen's Theatre? Or that guy on the altar with a Ph.D. in death?

We have hurled—like starlings, like Goths—through the castle of European memory. Our reflections have glanced upon the golden coach that carried Emperor Maximilian through the streets of Mexico City, thence onward through the sludge of a hundred varnished paintings.

I have come at last to Mexico, the country of my parents' birth. I do not expect to find anything that pertains to me.

We have strained the *rouge* cordon at the thresholds of imperial apartments; seen chairs low enough for dwarfs, commodious enough for angels.

We have imagined Empress Carlota standing in the shadows of an afternoon; we have followed her gaze down the Paseo de la Reforma toward the distant city. The Paseo was a nostalgic allusion to the Champs-Elysées, we learn, which Maximilian re-created for his tempestuous, crow-like bride.

Come this way, please . . .

European memory is not to be the point of our excursion. Señor Fuentes, our tour director, is already beginning to descend the hill from Chapultepec Castle. Señor Fuentes is consumed with contrition for time wasted this morning. Our "orientation tour" of Mexico City had started late, and so Señor Fuentes has been forced, regrettably—This way, please—to rush. He intends to uphold his schedule, as a way of upholding Mexico, against our expectation.

We had gathered at the appointed time at the limousine entrance to our hotel, beneath the banner welcoming contestants to the Señorita Mexico pageant. We—Japanese, Germans, Americans—were waiting promptly at nine. There was no bus. And as we waited, the Señorita Mexico contestants arrived. Drivers leaned into their cabs to pull out long-legged señoritas. The drivers then balanced the señoritas onto stiletto heels (the driveway was cobbled) before they passed the señoritas, *en pointe*, onto the waiting arms of officials.

Mexican men, meanwhile—doormen, bellhops, window washers, hotel guests—stopped dead in their tracks, wounded by the scent and spectacle of so many blond señoritas. The Mexican men assumed fierce expressions, nostrils flared, brows knit. Such expressions are masks—the men intend to convey their adoration of prey—as thoroughly ritualized as the smiles of beauty queens.

By now we can see the point of our excursion beyond the parched trees of Chapultepec Park—the Museo Nacional de Antropología—which is an air-conditioned repository for the artifacts of the Indian civilizations of Mesoamerica, the finest anthropological museum in the world.

"There will not be time to see everything," Señor Fuentes warns as he ushers us into the grand salon, our first sight of the debris of the Ancients. Señor Fuentes wants us in and out of here by noon.

Whereas the United States traditionally has rejoiced at the delivery of its landscape from "savagery," Mexico has taken its national identity only from the Indian, the mother. Mexico measures all cultural bastardy against the Indian; equates civilization with India—Indian kingdoms of a golden age; cities as fabulous as Alexandria or Benares or Constantinople; a court

I HAVE COME AT LAST TO MEXICO, THE COUNTRY OF MY PARENTS' BIRTH. I DO NOT EXPECT TO FIND ANYTHING THAT PERTAINS TO ME

MEXICO'S TRAGEDY IS THAT SHE HAS NO POLITICAL IDEA OF HERSELF AS RICH AS HER BLOOD

as hairless, as subtle as the Pekingese. Mexico equates barbarism with Europe, beardedness with Spain.

It is curious, therefore, that both modern nations should similarly apostrophize the Indian, relegate the Indian to the past.

Come this way, please. Mrs . . . . Ah . . . this way, please.

Señor Fuentes wears an avocado green sports coat with gold buttons. He is short. He is rather elegant, with a fine small head, small hands, small feet; with his two rows of fine small teeth like a nutcracker's teeth, with which he curtails consonants as cleanly as bitten thread. Señor Fuentes is brittle, he is watchful, he is ironic, he is metropolitan; his wit is quotational, literary, wasted on Mrs. Ah.

He is not our equal. His demeanor says he is not our equal. We mistake his condescension for humility. He will not eat when we eat. He will not spend when we shop. He will not have done with Mexico when we have done with Mexico. He is Mexican.

Señor Fuentes is a mystery to us, for there is no American equivalent to him; for there is no American equivalent to the subtleties he is paid to describe to us.

Mexico will not raise a public monument to Hernán Cortés, for example, the father of Mexico—the rapist. In the Diego Rivera murals in the presidential palace, the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán is rendered—its blood temples and blood canals—haughty as Troy, as vulnerable as Pompeii. Any suggestion of the complicity of other tribes of Indians in overthrowing the Aztec empire is painted over. Spaniards appear on the horizons of Arcadia as syphilitic brigands and demon-eyed priests.

The Spaniard entered the Indian by entering her city—the floating city—first as a suitor, ceremoniously, later by force. How should Mexico honor the rape?

In New England, the European and the Indian drew apart to regard each other with suspicion over centuries. Miscegenation was a sin against Protestant individualism. In Mexico, the European and the Indian consorted. The ravishment of fabulous Tenochtitlán ended in a marriage of blood and the generation of a "cosmic race," as the Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos has called it.

Mexico's tragedy is that she has no political idea of herself as rich as her blood.

The rhetoric of Señor Fuentes, like the murals of Diego Rivera, resorts often to the dream of India—to Tenochtitlán, the capital of the world before conquest. "Pre-conquest" in the Mexican political lexicon is tantamount to "pre-lapsarian" in the Judeo-Christian scheme, and harkens to a time Mexico feels herself to have been whole, a time before the Indian was separated from India by the serpent Spain.

Three centuries after Cortés Mexico declared herself independent of Spain. If Mexico would have no yoke, then Mexico would have no crown, then Mexico would have no father. The denial of Spain has persisted into our century.

The priest and the landowner yet serve Señor Fuentes as symbols of the hated Spanish order. Though, in private, Mexico is Catholic; Mexican mothers may wish for light-skinned children; touch blond hair and good luck will be yours.

In private, in Mexican Spanish, *indio* is a seller of Chiclets, a sidewalk squatter. *Indio* means backward or lazy or lower-class. In the eyes of the world, Mexico raises a magnificent Museum of Anthropology—the finest in the world—to honor the Indian mother.

In the nave of the National Cathedral, we notice that the floor slopes dramatically. "The cathedral is sinking," Señor Fuentes explains as a hooded figure approaches our group from behind a column. She is an Indian woman. She wears a blue stole; her hands are cupped, beseeching; tear marks ream her cheeks. In Spanish, Señor Fuentes forbids this apparition: "Go ask *padrecito* to pry some gold off the altar for you."

"Mexico City is built upon swamp," Señor Fuentes resumes in English. Therefore, the cathedral is sinking." But it is clear that Señor Fuentes believes the sinkage is due to the oppressive weight of Spanish Catholicism; s masses of gold; its volumes of deluded suspiration.

Mexico blamed the ruin of the nineteenth century on the foreigner, and ith reason. Once emptied of Spain, the palace of Mexico became the ollhouse of France. Mexico was overrun by imperial armies. The greed of urope met the manifest destiny of the United States in Mexico. Austria ent an archduke to marry Mexico with full panoply of candles and bishops. he United States reached under Mexico's skirt every chance he got.

The Mexican habit of blaming the outsider persists. Mexicans call their ivil war a "revolution"—"Mexico for Mexicans" was the cry. In fact, it as Mexican against Mexican. Whom now shall Señor Fuentes blame for twentieth century that has become synonymous with corruption?

Well, as long as you stay out of the way of the police no one will bother ou, is conventional Mexican wisdom, and Mexico continues to live her dai- life. In the capital, the air is the color of the buildings of Siena. Telephone onnections are an aspect of the will of God. Mexicans drive on the side- alks.

A man on the street corner seizes the opportunity of stalled traffic to earn is living as a fire-eater. His ten children pass among the cars and among he honking horns to collect small coins.

Thank you. Thank you very much. A pleasure, Mrs. . . . Ah. Thank you ery much.

Señor Fuentes bids each farewell. He accepts tips within a handshake. Ie bows slightly. We have no complaint with Señor Fuentes, after all. The bus was not his fault. Mexico City is not his fault. And Señor Fuentes vill return to his unimaginable Mexico and we will return to our rooms to ake aspirin and to initiate long-distance telephone calls. Señor Fuentes will emove his avocado green coat, and, having divested, Señor Fuentes will in some fashion partake of what he has successfully kept from us all day, which is the life and the drinking water of Mexico.

The Virgin of Guadalupe symbolizes the entire coherence of Mexi- o, body and soul. You will not find the story of the Virgin within hidebound ecular histories of Mexico nor indeed within the credulous repertoire of ›eñor Fuentes—and the omission renders the history of Mexico incom- ›rehensible.

One recent afternoon, within the winey bell jar of a very late lunch, I told he story of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Lynn, a sophisticated twentieth-cen- ury woman. The history of Mexico, I promised her, is neither mundane nor nasculine, but it is a miracle play with trapdoors and sequins and jokes on he living.

In the sixteenth century, when Indians were demoralized by the routing of their gods, when Indians were dying by millions from the plague of Eu- ›pe, the Virgin Mary appeared pacing on a hillside to an Indian peasant ıamed Juan Diego—his Christian name, for Juan was a convert. It was De- :ember 1531.

On his way to Mass, Juan passes the hill called Tepeyac just as the east s beginning to kindle to dawn. He hears there a cloud of birdsong bursting overhead, of whistles and flutes and beating wings, and look: a maiden dressed in the robes of an Aztec princess. She speaks Nahuatl, the Aztec :ongue. Her complexion is brown as cinnamon. She is Maria, the Mother of God, the Christian Mary, she tells Juan Diego.

At the Lady's behest, this Prufrock Indian must go several times to the bishop of Mexico City, to ask that a chapel be built on Tepeyac where the Lady can share in the sorrows of her people.

The bishop wants proof.

Peering through the grille of her cigarette smoke, Lynn heard, and she

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE SYMBOLIZES THE ENTIRE COHERENCE OF MEXICO, BODY AND SOUL



"Spanish father and Throwback mother, Undecided"

BY THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, CATHOLICISM WILL HAVE ASSUMED THE ASPECT OF THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE: BROWN SKIN

seemed to approve the story.

The Virgin tells Juan Diego to climb the hill and gather a sheaf of roses as proof for the bishop, Castilian roses—impossible in Mexico in December of 1531. Juan carries the roses in the folds of his cloak, a pregnant messenger. Upon entering the bishop's presence, Juan parts his cloak and the roses tumble; the bishop falls to his knees.

The legend concludes with a concession to humanity, proof more durable than roses—the imprint of the Virgin's image upon the cloak of Juan Diego.

But in the end, with crumpled napkins, torn carbon, bitter dregs of coffee, Lynn gave the story over to the Spaniards. A recruitment poster for the new religion, no more, she said. An itinerant diva with a costume trunk. Birgit Nilsson as Aida.

Why do we assume Spain made up the story?

The importance of the story is that Indians believed it. The jokes, the vaudeville, the relegation of the Spanish bishop to the role of comic adversary, the Virgin's unlikely cavalier, and especially the brown-faced Mary—all elements spoke directly to Indians.

The result of the apparition and of the miraculous image of the Lady remaining upon the cloak of Juan Diego was a mass conversion of Indians to Catholicism.

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe (privately, affectionately, Mexicans call her "*La Morenita*"—little darkling) has become the unofficial, the private flag of Mexicans. Unique possession of her image is a more wonderful election to Mexicans than any political call to nationhood. Perhaps Mexico's tragedy in our century, perhaps Mexico's abiding grace thus far, is that she has no political idea of herself as compelling as her icon.

The Virgin appears everywhere in Mexico. On dashboards and on calendars, on playing cards, on lamp shades and cigar boxes; within the loneliness and tattooed upon the very skins of Mexicans.

Nor is the image of Guadalupe a diminishing mirage of the sixteenth century. She has become more vivid with time, developing in her replication from earthy shades of melon and musk to bubblegum pink, Windex blue, to achieve the hard, literal focus of holy cards or baseball cards; of Krishna or St. Jude or the Atlanta Braves.

Mexico City stands today as the last medieval capital of the world. Mexico is the creation of a Spanish Catholicism that attempted to draw continents together as one flesh. The success of Spanish Catholicism in Mexico resulted in a kind of proof, a profound concession to humanity: the *mestizaje*.

What joke on the living? Lynn said.

The joke is that Spain arrived with missionary zeal at the shores of contemplation. But Spain had no idea of the absorbent strength of Indian spirituality. By the waters of baptism, the active European was entirely absorbed within the contemplation of the Indian. The faith that Europe imposed in the sixteenth century was, by virtue of the Guadalupe, embraced by the Indian. Catholicism has become an Indian religion. By the twenty-first century, the locus of the Catholic Church, by virtue of numbers, will be Latin America, by which time Catholicism itself will have assumed the aspect of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Brown skin.

Time magazine dropped through the chute of my mailbox a few years ago with a cover story on Mexico headlined "The Population Curse." From the vantage point of Sixth Avenue, the editors of Time-Life peer down into the basin of Mexico City—like peering down into the skull of a pumpkin—to contemplate the nightmare of fecundity, the tangled mass of slime and seed and hair.

America sees death in all that life; sees rot. Life—not illness and poverty; not death—life becomes the curse of Mexico City in the opinion of *Time* magazine.

For a long time, I had my own fear of Mexico, an American fear. Mexi
's history was death. Her stature was tragedy. A race of people that looked
ke me had disappeared.

I had a dream about Mexico City, a conquistador's dream. I was lost and
te and twisted in my sheet. I dreamed streets narrower than they actual-
are—narrow as old Jerusalem. I dreamed sheets, entanglements, bunting,
anging larvae-like from open windows, distended from balconies and from
nes thrown over the streets. These streets were not empty streets. I was
nong a crowd. The crowd was not a carnival crowd. This crowd was pur-
oseful and ordinary, welling up from subways, ascending stairwells. And then
ie dream followed the course of all my dreams. I must find the airport—
ie American solution—I must somehow escape, fly over.

Each face looked like mine. But no one looked at me.

I have come at last to Mexico, to the place of my parents' birth. I have
nceled this trip three times.

As the plane descends into the basin of Mexico City, I brace myself for
me confrontation with death, with India, with confusion of purpose, that
do not know how to master.

"Do you speak Spanish?" the driver asks in English.

Andres, the driver employed by my hotel, is in his forties. He lives in the
olonia Roma, near the airport. There is nothing about the city he does not
now. This is his city and he is its memory.

Andres's car is a dark blue Buick—about 1975. Windows slide up and down
t the touch of his finger. There is the smell of disinfectant in Andres's car,
s there is in every bus or limousine or taxi I've ridden in Mexico—the smell
f the glycerin crystals in urinals. Dangling from Andres's rearview mirror
the other appliance common to all public conveyance in Mexico—a
sary.

Andres is a man of the world, a man, like other working-class Mexican
ien, eager for the world. He speaks two languages. He knows several cities.
Ie has been to the United States. His brother lives there still.

In the annals of the famous European discoverers there is invariably an
ndian guide, a translator—willing or not—to facilitate, to preserve Eu-
ope's stride. These seem to have become fluent in pallor before Europe
earned anything of them. How is that possible?

The most famous guide in Mexican history is also the most reviled by Mex-
can histories—the villainess Marina—"La Malinche." Marina became the
over of Cortés. So, of course, Mexicans say she betrayed India for Europe.
n the end, she was herself betrayed, left behind when Cortés repaired to his
Spanish wife.

Nonetheless, Marina's treachery anticipates the epic marriage of Mexi-
o. La Malinche prefigures, as well, the other, the beloved female aspect of
Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Because Marina was the seducer of Spain, she challenges the boast Eu-
ope has always told about India.

I assure you Mexico has an Indian point of view as well, a female point
of view:

I opened my little eye and the Spaniard disappeared.

Imagine a dark pool; the Spaniard dissolved; the surface triumphantly smooth.

My eye!

*The spectacle of the Spaniard on the horizon, vainglorious—the shiny sur-
faces, clanks of metal; the horses, the muskets, the jingling bits.*

Cannot you imagine me curious? Didn't I draw near?

European vocabularies do not have a silence rich enough to describe the
orce within Indian contemplation. Only Shakespeare understood that In-
dians have eyes. We took you in. Shakespeare saw Caliban eyeing his mas-
ter's books—well, why not his master as well? The same dumb lust.

What dat? is a question philosophers ask. And Indians.

Shakespeare's comedy, of course, resolves itself to the European's ap-
plause. The play that Shakespeare did not write is Mexico City.

ONLY SHAKESPEARE, AMONG
THE EUROPEANS, UNDERSTOOD
THAT INDIANS HAVE EYES.
WE TOOK YOU IN.

AN STANDS IN THE
N TO MODERNITY
SPAIN: WILLING TO
IN ORDER TO SURVIVE

Now the great city swells under the moon; seems, now, to breathe of itself—the largest city in the world—a Globe, kind Will, not of your devising, not under your control.

The superstition persists in European travel literature that Indian Christianity is the thinnest veneer covering an ulterior altar. But there is a possibility still more frightening to the European imagination, so frightening that in 500 years such a possibility has scarcely found utterance.

What if the Indian were converted?

Then the Indian eye becomes a portal through which the entire pageant of European civilization has already passed, turned inside out.

Look once more at the city from La Malinche's point of view. Mexico is littered with the shells and skulls of Spain, cathedrals, poems, and the limbs of orange trees. But everywhere you look in this great museum of Spain, you see living Indians.

Where are the conquistadores?

Post-colonial Europe expresses pity or guilt behind its sleeve, pities the Indian the loss of her gods or her tongue. But let the Indian speak for herself. Spanish is now an Indian language. Mexico City has become the metropolitan see of the Spanish-speaking world. In something like the way New York won English from London after World War I, Mexico City has captured Spanish.

The Indian stands in the same relationship to modernity as she did to Spain—willing to marry, to breed, to disappear in order to ensure her inclusion in time; refusing to absent herself from the future. The Indian has chosen to survive, to consort with the living, to live in the city, to crawl on her hands and knees, if need be, to Mexico City or L.A.

I take it as an Indian achievement that I am alive, that I am Catholic, that I speak English, that I am an American. My life began, it did not end, in the sixteenth century.

The idea occurs to me on a weekday morning, at a crowded intersection in Mexico City: Europe's lie. Here I am in the capital of death. Life surges about me; wells up from subways, wave upon wave; descends from stairwells. Everywhere I look. Babies. Traffic. Food. Beggars. Life. Life coming upon me like sunstroke.

Each face looks like mine. No one looks at me.

Where, then, is the famous conquistador?

We have eaten him, the crowd tells me, *we have eaten him with our eyes*.

I run to the mirror to see if this is true.

It is true.

In the distance, at its depths, Mexico City stands as the prophetic example. Mexico City is modern in ways that "multi-racial," ethnically "diverse" New York City is not yet. Mexico City is centuries more modern than racially "pure," provincial Tokyo. Nothing to do with computers or skyscrapers.

Mexico City is the capital of modernity, for in the sixteenth century, under the tutelage of a curious Indian whore, under the patronage of the Queen of Heaven, Mexico initiated the task of the twenty-first century—the renewal of the old, the known world, through miscegenation. Mexico carries the idea of a round world to its biological conclusion.

For a time, when he was young, Andres, my driver, worked in Alpine County in northern California.

And then he worked at a Lake Tahoe resort. He remembers the snow. He remembers the weekends when blond California girls would arrive in their ski suits and sunglasses. Andres worked at the top of a ski lift. His job was to reach out over a little precipice to help the California girls out of their lift chairs. He would maintain his grasp until they were balanced upon the snow. And then he would release them, watch them descend the winter slope—how they laughed!—oblivious of his admiration, until they disappeared. ■

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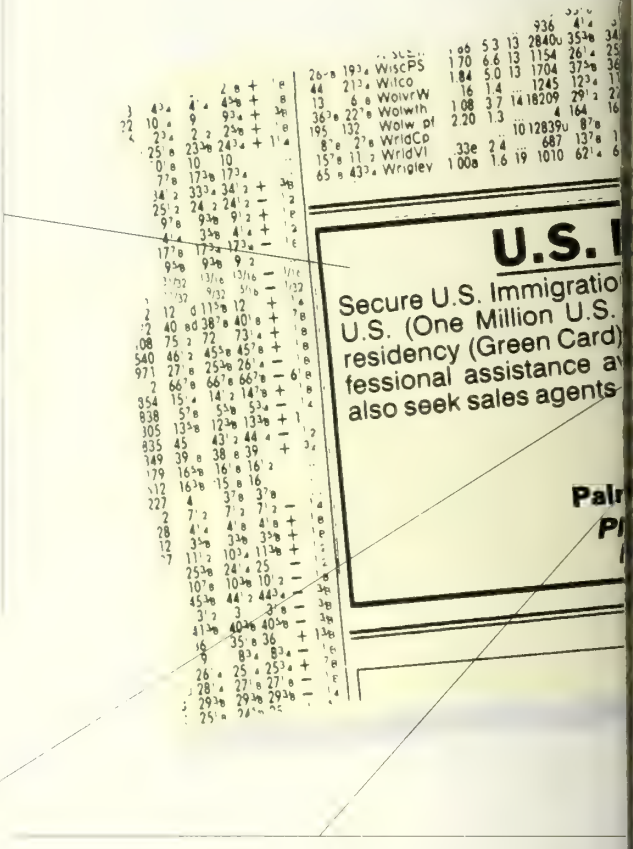


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BRING US YOUR HU

A new U.S. immigration policy opens do

American businesses hungry for capital routinely place advertisements in the financial pages, here and overseas, in an attempt to attract foreigners who might be seeking a secure haven for their pesos, riyals, or Hong Kong dollars. But never before has the proffered return-on-investment included—as it does in this ad, nestled amid the stock tables in the *New York Times*—a green card. Immigration now has a "supply side": A new federal law, which went into effect October 1, offers foreigners willing to invest at least $1 million in an American business permanent U.S. residency for themselves and their families. Permanent residency is the most important step on the path to full citizenship, a path that tends to be arduous, as is attested by the ten-year backlog of 2,300,000 applications for immigrant visas currently taxing the files of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). These are not the immigrants sought by real estate developers, banks, and investment companies. Journeying from Mexico, say, or Haiti, such immigrants do not read the *Asian Wall Street Journal* or London's *Financial Times*, and tend to carry what capital they bring to America rolled up in money belts or socks.



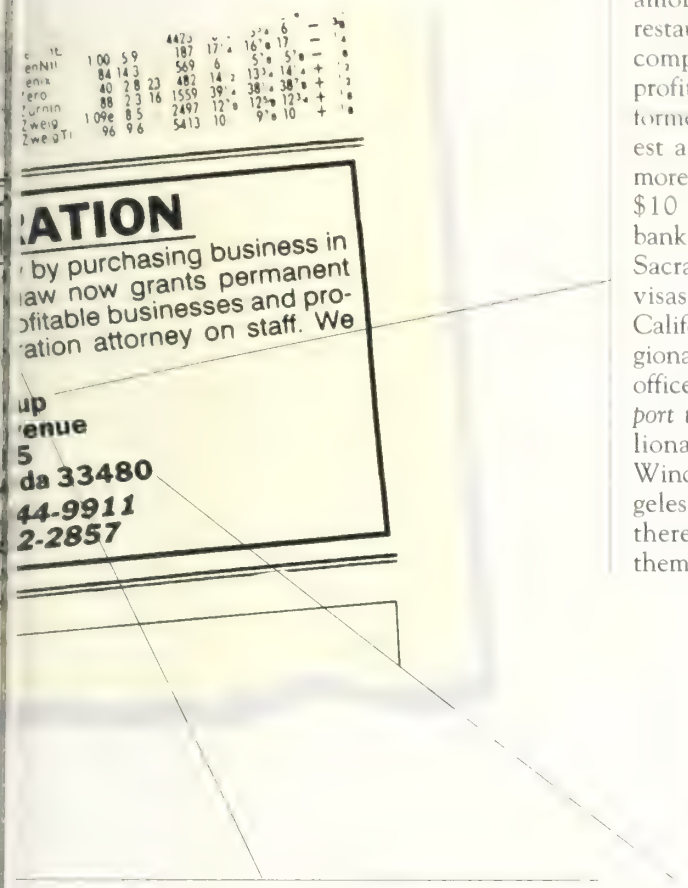
The Immigration Act of 1990 represents the most recent revamping of U.S. immigration policy, and, as in the past, its revisions mostly reflect shifts in the nature and magnitude of national groups seeking entry into the United States and the pressures brought to bear by ethnic groups here (Irish-Americans, Mexican-Americans) who would like to ease the immigration of more of their own. But tucked away in the law is an unprecedented change known as the "investor provision." Proposed by the Heritage Foundation, the Washington-based convervative think tank, the provision was introduced and championed by Senator Alan Simpson (R., Wyoming), whose only previous interest in immigration had been in drastically restricting it. Figuring that what he could not beat back he might as well use, Simpson proposed that the United States set aside 5,000 visas annually for millionaire investors and their kin. The Senate included the provision in the bill, and when the House did not, Simpson fought for it in a joint Senate-House conference committee, at which time the White House threw in its backing. Not only did Simpson prevail but the number of investor visas was raised to 10,000 a year.

As a result of the investor provision, the INS expect several billion dollars more in overseas capital to flow into the U.S. economy annually, as foreign investor buy existing businesses and establish new ones. In orde to qualify for residency, investors must prove to INS ad judicators that they have deposited their money, hire at least ten U.S. citizens or lawful aliens, and taken ar active involvement in their new business. Regulation also require that funds must come from outside the United States—overseas monies already parked here won't do—and remain invested "at risk" for at least two years before a green card will be issued. Among the most enthusiastic respondents: Hong Kong capitalists who must either become communists or leave town before 1997.

Mark Dowie is editor-at-large of InterNation, a transnational feature syndicate based in New York City.

LED MILLIONAIRES

he world's wealthiest, *by Mark Dowie*



Interest in the new quota has surfaced in capital-hungry investment companies such as this one, which has among its holdings interests in a chain of Hardee's restaurants, a light-bulb manufacturer, and a cosmetics company. Not only have established firms sought to profit by the new law but also new outfits have been formed specifically to take advantage of it. The cleverest are promoting ventures that would enable ten or more visas to qualify as a group, thereby raising at least $10 million at once. One California investment banker, eager to finance a $150 million trade center in Sacramento, is currently touring the Far East touting visas. Another concern, located in Newport Beach, California, is headed by Harold W. Ezell, a former regional commissioner of the INS. Ezell has opened three offices in Taiwan and produced a video entitled *Passport to the American Dream*. He offers Taiwanese millionaires their choice of Wienerschnitzel franchises, Windmill car washes, and apartment houses in Los Angeles. "There are millions and millions of dollars out there," Ezell told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Let's bring them to America."

ıe attorney on staff at the Global Group will no ubt be of help in such matters as what businesses ful- l INS guidelines and which family members qualify · green cards. But firms like Global are bound to have wyers who are savvy, too, in the ways the investor ovision can be linked to other revisions in immigra- ɔn policy—for instance, a new provision that triples e previous quota on highly educated and skilled ɔrkers. The INS hopes to attract 140,000 scientists, ecutives, and other "members of professions holding ıvanced degrees," and Global's staff attorney will not : unaware that a foreign investor might well bring ch professionals with him when he makes his move to .e United States. So much for supply-side thinking at reasons the investor provision will create many :w, quality jobs for current American citizens.

The alleged intent of the investor provision was to aid rural areas suffering high unemployment, not places like Palm Beach, Florida. But wealthy internationals aren't going to be traipsing around Appalachia; already they've made it clear to their financial suitors that they want to live and invest in places like Palm Beach, New York, or the Taiwanese neighborhood in Monterey Park, California, where culture shock is minimal and boutiques are around the corner. Such is their contemporary version of the American dream. But the American dream as traditionally understood has not died—we *are* "a nation of immigrants," made great by the labor, desires, and ingenuity of those seeking a new life. Only last year did we pay tribute to that very idea by refurbishing Ellis Island, where millions of our forefathers and mothers were quarantined before coming ashore. But do we need immigrants for their money too? Will the day come when the only way to get here is aboard the Concorde?

STANDARDS

How great songs name us

By E. L. Doctorow

Great Songs and the Men Who Wrote Them. Invariably from poor families, possibly immigrants, coming to light only in their sixties or seventies (uncovered first by the archivists, interviewers, and professors of popular culture, then presented for evenings of song and reminiscence under the auspices of arts councils, then made the subjects of documentary films) because as composers of classics they were thought to have died long ago. And so they rise like vampires from their coffins, toupees slightly askew. They have blonds on their arms who are taller than they, glittery silk-sheathed women highly made-up, past their prime, not as definitively the composers' juniors as they once were but still solemnly sexual. The first thing you notice about the men who wrote the songs is their rampant self-satisfaction. They talk to you nose to nose, grab your lapels, and inform you of everything you have to know about their greatness. They see no contradiction between their established reputation and the need to advise you of it. They want your obeisance even if they have to teach you what you need to know to supply it. Cigars, this is the culture of cigars, and knowledge comes by anecdote. They light their cigars and tell stories from their lives that prove how all the complexities and ambiguities of existence boil down to a few simple lessons that you can learn too if you apply yourself. They are wealthy, having made something that produces income year after year after year without any further effort on their part. They reside in Palm Springs and go regularly to Las Vegas, and to New York every fall to see the new shows. They like Atlantic City, and Chicago, and New Orleans, but wherever they are they go to the clubs, they visit clubs as other people visit cathedrals, and make a point particularly of going to the small rooms where the new performers are showcasing. They are uneducated men who are proud of their reading and knowledge of human nature. They favor factual work, not fiction, certainly not poetry, but popular military histories and the memoirs of statesmen and inspirational world leaders. From this thin gruel they make a culture by which their minds apprehend the Mysteries. They have written usually hundreds of songs, perhaps two or three or five of which you will recognize as standards, ultimate and lasting artifacts of public consciousness. You will not have to encourage them to sit down at a piano and deliver one of their standards in their usually bad, gravelly voices and incredibly old-fashioned sheet music accompaniment. And they will advise you how many recordings have been made of this song, and by whom, none of them as right in the phrasing, in the interpretation, as their own. They will demonstrate by giving you various readings of crooners and belters and chanteuses, and then showing you how the original, from their throats, is so much better. Tirelessly, exhaustively, they will go through the song again and again, never finding it anything less than fresh though they have been singing it for decades; the song is thirty, forty, fifty years old and is two or three minutes long, and they have been singing it and applauding themselves for it for years, unsated in their wonder for it, the genius of it, that it exists as an achievement as surely as the Capitol in Washington or the four heads of Mount Rushmore. And you wonder, the voice not being there and the music barely, primitively established on the piano, and the words at a level of composition that would make a poet wince or shake his head in pity—how is it the song is so good, so truly fine that recognition surges in you like a current and you laugh for the pleasure of it? How is it from the vulgar tongue and squawking throat, from the dulled and cataracted eye, from the lobeless brain of this irremediable, dim wit, something has issued that is actually your own dear and cherished possession, a memory of yourself, a high moment of your own imagining, some precipitate of your best and most noble expectation for your life, when you were young and courageous and held her in knightly

E. L. Doctorow is the author of seven novels; his most recent is Billy Bathgate.

idealization, turning, turning around the room in a shuffling trance, as the sweet band turned its measures on the scratchy record, and all your aching, swollen blue desires were given the name of Romance?

◆

The more I think about songs, the more mysterious they become. They stand in our minds as spiritual histories of certain times; they have the capacity to represent in their lyrics and lines of melody, wars and other disasters, moral process, the fruits of experience, and, like prayers, the consolations beyond loss. Peoples are brought into being by them. They are a resource both for the loyalists defending their country and the revolutionists overthrowing it. Yet they are such short and linear things. Little sale tags on life. Their rhythms alone can establish states of mind that are imperially preemptive and, by implication, condescending of all other states of mind. Yet it is essential for their effect that they not go on and on. Not only their single-mindedness but their brevity makes them universally and instantly accessible as no other form is. To cure up life into a lyricized tune is to do tremendous violence to reality, and this is the source of their powerful magic.

◆

What happens in a song that differentiates it from speech, even poetic speech? What makes the spoken voice the singing voice, when does the pitch of a voice become its note, how does the enumeration of a word become the sung word? I've just listened to a song. Words—the vowels of words—are elongated in songs to such an extent that if you spoke the lines of a lyric, without its music but with the vowels held as they are when they are sung, people would not wait to hear the ends of your sentences. This is most particularly true of ballads and love songs, less so of novelty numbers or humorous songs, or songs that take exception to someone's behavior. But it is possible that the appeal of a song lies partly in its deceleration of thought, a release perhaps from the normal race of the mind through its ideas and impressions. To ritually retard a thought is to dwell in its meaning, to find the pleasures of posed conflicts and their resolutions as you would not in a mere recitation of lyrics.



But everyone understands the difference between song and speech, even children, suggesting that the grunt and the note are equally inborn. The question then arises, why is song for the occasion and speech for the everyday? Why do we not sing most of the time as they do in operas, and speak when we make the especial effort to compact and elevate our feelings?

◆

Lullabies, school songs, anthems, battle hymns, work songs, chanteys, love songs, bawdy songs, laments, requiems. They're there in every age of life, for every occasion, on the sepulchral voices of the choir, in the stomp and shout of the whorehouse piano player. But all songs are songs of justification.

◆

There are no science songs that I know of. No song that tells you the force of gravity is a product of the masses of two objects divided by the inverse ratio of the distance between them. Science is self-justifying and neither seeks nor offers redress. Yet science teaches us something about song: Scientific formulas describe the laws by which the physical universe operates and suggest in equations that a balance is possible even when things are in apparent imbalance. So do songs. Songs are compensatory. When a singer asks, why did you do this to me, why did you break my heart? the inhering formula is that the degree of betrayal is equivalent to the eloquence of the cry of pain. The rage is the square root of love multiplied by a power of the truth of the situation. Feelings transform as quickly and recklessly as subatomic events, and when there is critical mass a song erupts, but the overall amount of pure energy is constant. And when the song is good we recognize it as truth. Like a formula, it applies to everyone, not just the singer.

◆

If we sang most of the time, as they do in operas, our lives would resound,

Illustration by Barry Blitt

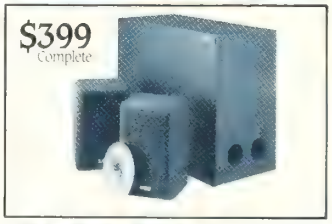
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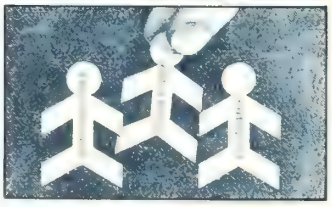
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as legends; there would be very little room for new data and few occasions to genuinely advance the race, for each small thought or change of direction, each human ploy or representation of feeling, would be monumental. You will notice in classical operas that time moves more slowly than it does before the curtain goes up or after it comes down. There is an actual time warp in every operatic performance between the opening scene of the first act and the closing scene of the last, and that is because the number of narrative events is actually quite small, whereas the reactions to each of them are quite extended. If we sang most of the time, as people do in operas, we would endlessly stand and arrange and rearrange ourselves to offer our solos and the duets and trios and quartets and quintets and choruses of our relationships, and the volatility of the world would diminish, time itself would have to wait for us to register every change of weather with an aria, and we would all move in stately slow motion and rap our staffs upon the earth to bring up the nether spirits, and they would come, because opera is song that has moved outward in all directions and enveloped the entire world in performance, and all the operas ever written are, conglomerately, one song swollen into cosmos.

◆

There are publicly held songs whose authorship is anonymous and there are privately held songs that are the copyrighted property of the composer. Folk songs coming out of the hills, up from the mines, fading behind the night train like its whistle. Measuring the time of the long swings of the sledgehammer between bursts of stone. On the one hand. And on the other, what is worked out at the piano, his burning cigarette scoring a black groove in the lid of the upright, the chord bursts interrupted by urgently penciled notations on the staff.

We make distinctions between what is anonymous and known, historic and contemporary, amateur and professional. We make distinctions of motive, or felt reality. The voice that finds words for the pain. The voice that chooses words to convey the pain.

Yet the basic and defining distinc-

on is between an oral culture and a ritten. Enduring folk songs are standards composed orally and given directly into the air, without notation nd, therefore, without regard to property rights. Every song, even a so-called olk song, is composed by one person r perhaps by two. But when the song s not written the creator of the song as neither the means of protecting nor the opportunity of seeing to it hat it is replicated, as it is, by other erformers. Perhaps this is not even onceived as desirable, or more likely ot even thought of as a possibility.

Oral cultures are proud, creative, articipatory; the mind gives as it receives; and it is not always clear where he self ends and the community beins. So that over the years if the composed but unwritten song endures, it uffers changes, amendments, revisions, refinements, bevelings, plangs, sandings, polishings, oilings, ubbings, handlings, until it stands, s elegantly simple in its presence, as lowing in its grain, as a beautiful iece of country cabinetry.

"Come all you fair and tender ladies, ake warning how you court young nen, they're like a star of the sumner morning, they first appear and hen they're gone." The gender sorrow f centuries is in those lines. The ounsel is work-pure. You remember ow from the porch of the dark nansard house along the railroad rack she watched from the open door lay after day, night after night, and aw in its blinding sunlight or deep iolet starlight the terrible unbroken iew of the wide but cultivated plains? At dawn the men appeared on the ow horizon flinging the sheaves of ay on the wagons trailing the mechanical reaper, which she heard from his distance as the perturbation of edclothes, a rasp of breath, a soft and oneless grunt of discovery. Well, it goes back beyond the reaper to the scythe, and back beyond the five-string banjo to the lute: You see her? It's the same woman standing there. But she's in the muck yard, walled by the small shire houses of sod and thatch, with only God and her tight linen cap to protect her from the defilation of her Lord.

Whereas today songs are written on paper and published and copyrighted. They may be interpreted but not changed. And it is as if the spirit voices in the air have gone silent as God has been silent since we wrote down his words in a book. "Tell me how long the train's been gone," says another old song, and that is what it is talking about.

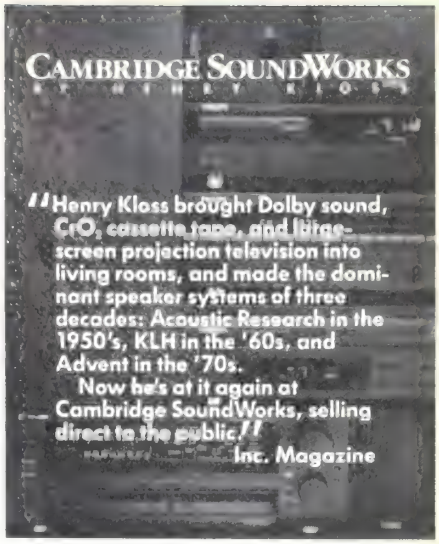
◆

Perhaps the first songs were lullabies. Perhaps mothers were the first singers. Perhaps they learned to soothe their squirming simian babies by imitating the sounds of moving water—the gurgles, cascades, plashes, puddlings, flows, floods, spurts, spills, gushes, laps, and sucks. Perhaps they knew their babies were born from water. And rhythm was the gentle rock of the water hammock slung between the pelvic trees. And melody was the sound the water made when the baby stirred its limbs.

There is the endless delight we take in new beings, the precious fleshlings of our future, our cuntlets and cocklings, our dolls stamped out by God; and there is the antediluvian rage they evoke by their blind, screaming, shitting, and pissing helplessness. So the songs for them are two-faced, lulling in the gentle maternal voice but viciously surrealistic in the words: "Rock-a-by baby in the treetop, when the wind blows the cradle will rock, when the bough breaks the cradle will fall, down will come baby, cradle and all." Imagine falling through a tree, your legs locked and your arms tightly bound to your sides. Imagine falling down into the world with your little head bongoing against the boughs and the twigs and branches whipping across your ears as if you were a xylophone. Imagine being born. Lullabies urge us to go to sleep at the same time they enact for us the terror of waking. In this way we learn for our own sake the immanence in all feelings of their opposite. The Bible, too, speaks of this as the Fall.

◆

"Goober Peas" was a popular song during the Civil War. Goober peas came in a can. They were a ubiquitous field ration. "Peas! Peas! Peas! Peas! Eating goober peas. Goodness how delicious, eating goober peas." This song represents one of the earliest expressions of the irony of ordi-



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[illegible] warfare, by [illegible] moment when [illegible] became more [illegible] than the courage of men. [illegible] beheaded in [illegible] by a shell fired a mile away. [illegible] if you have the eyes to watch his body gridded, scored, perforated, and sectioned, quartered, dismembered, and disemboweled with such mechanical efficiency that he is a putrefying blood blob percolating into the earth even as his anguished "Maaa!" still sings in the air.) In recognition of this truth the irony of ordinary soldiers creeps into the campground. We may imagine them marching there singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," but in the evening before their action, in contemplation of their death at dawn, when they will run in their chill across the strangely silent meadow, with the familiar beloved scent of hay in their nostrils, and dew loomed in delicate webs of white on the grass, and the woods ahead of them drawn downward by the sunlight, first the treetops and then the slowly thickening trunks, until they see the lead raking toward them as sizzles of light—in contemplation of this they regard one another around the campfire and laugh and sing as raucously as they can, "Peas! Peas! Peas! Peas! Eating goober peas. Goodness how delicious, eating goober peas."

◆

"(She's Only) A Bird in a Gilded Cage" is a song written at the turn of the century. The tone of this song is moralistic, compassionately reproachful. A young girl marries an old man for his money, and having done so dies of lack of love. But popular culture finds its truest expression in the patently moral and covertly lascivious. Think of her drifting through the oppressive rooms of her husband's home—velour drapes, tapestries of the hunt, plush sofas and throne chairs, the thick Persian rugs, the tasseled bellpulls. She wears obsidian bracelets on her arms. Her fingers are ringed and she removes each ring ceremoniously when she sits down to practice the piano. She mar[illegible] and money keeps even the [illegible] sealed, the cries of the street muted and fading, like her memory. Once she ran free up and down the dank stairwells of poverty, with her cracked ankle shoes slipping off her heels. There was a smart and angry mother upstairs who trained her away from the artless desires and glittering eyes of adoration of the neighborhood boys. There was a father who knew what he had to sell. And now the bird sits and practices her étude, her most taxing physical task of the day. She will be given tea soon, and settled for her afternoon nap, and helped with her bath, and dressed for dinner, and will present herself to her husband at an alluring distance downtable from him. Lonely, pampered, imprisoned in idleness, she will find the one form of expression left to her when at last, in the dark light of her bedroom, with his assistance, she prepares for bed.

"Her beauty was sold for an old man's gold. She's a bird in a gilded cage." If written today, of course, the young woman would not die. The last verse would have her blotting the dribble of oatmeal from the old man's trembling chin and striding off to her classes in medical school. But as a moralistic (if hypocritical) text from the late nineteenth century, the song portrays a common social disaster.

A song written about the same time is "Come Home, Father." The child stands at the bar, pulling on the sleeve of the drunken father. In a sense this is a companion song, a male version of "(She's Only) A Bird in a Gilded Cage." Both songs describe characteristic recourses of the American working poor in the second half of the nineteenth century.

◆

With Tin Pan Alley, songs became a widely distributed industrial spiritual product. The standards that emerged from this manufactory release us into a flow of imagery that whirls us through our decades, our eras, our changing landscape. For a long while industrialized America looks back longingly at its rural past: "When You Were Sweet Sixteen," it sighs, "In the Evening by the Moonlight," "On the Banks of the Wabash," "In the Good Old Summertime." Then the spirit changes; defiance, rebelliousness is encoded in the sophistications of the double entendre: "(You Can Go as Far as You Like With Me) In My Merry Oldsmobile," "There'll Be a Hot Time (In the Old Town, Tonight)," "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing."

◆

When a song is a standard it can reproduce itself from one of its constituent parts. If you merely recite the words you will hear the melody. If you hum the melody the words will articulate themselves in your mind. That is an indication of an unusual self-referential power—the physical equivalent would be regeneration of a severed limb, or cloning an entire being from one cell. Standards from every period of our lives remain cross-indexed in our brains to be called up in whole, or in part, or, in fact, to come to mind unbidden. Nothing else can as suddenly and poignantly evoke the look, the feel, the smell of our times past. We use standards in the privacy of our minds as signifiers of our actions and relationships. They can be a cheap means of therapeutic self-discovery. If, for example, you are deeply in love and thinking about her and looking forward to seeing her, pay attention to the tune you're humming. Is it "Just One of Those Things"? You will soon end the affair.

◆

Of Great Songs, the men who wrote them will tell you their basic principle of composition. Keep it simple. The simpler, the better. You want untrained voices to handle it in the shower, in the kitchen. Try to keep the tune in one octave. Stick with the four basic chords and avoid tricky rhythms. They may not know that this is the aesthetic of the church hymn. They may not know that hymns were the first hits. But they know that hymns and their realm of discourse ennoble or idealize life, express its pieties, and are in themselves totally proper and appropriate for all ears. And so most popular ballads are, in their characteristic romanticism, secularized hymns.

◆

The principle of keeping it simple suggests why many standards sound alike. One might even say a song can't become a standard unless it is reminiscent of existing standards. Maybe

his is why we feel a new good song has he characteristic of seeming, on first iearing, always to have existed. In a ;ense it has. Just as we in our own ninds seem to have always existed, regardless of the date of our birth. A standard suggests itself as having been around all along, and waiting only for he proper historical moment in which o reveal itself.

When people say "our song" they nean they and the song exist together is some sort of generational truth. They are met to make a common destiny. The song names them, it rescues them from the accident of ahistorical genetic existence. They are located in cultural time. A crucial event, a specific setting, a certain smile, a kind of lingo, a degree of belief or skepticism, a particular humor, or a dance step, goes with the song. And from these ephemera we make our place in civilization. For good or bad, we have our timely place.

◆

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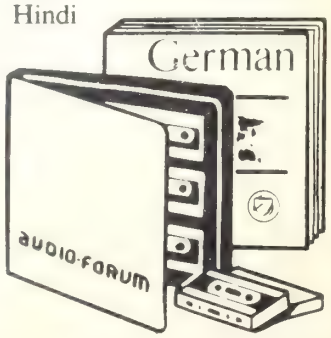
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INVENTING AN ETHNIC RIVALRY

Sri Lanka's civil war has political, not historical, roots

By Anthony Spaeth

Last summer I ook a holiday along ie south coast of Sri inka, the lushly trop- al island nation off ie southern tip of ndia. I strolled the eaches, nodding eetings to obese Ger- ans in skimpy bath- ng suits—tourists rought so many miles ist by the crystalline aters of the Indian)cean, the fragrant od, the "taste of par- dise" all the bro- hures seem to prom- ie, and perhaps by the oung women (men o) offered by pimps at the water's dge. Idyllic, exotic, and for me a lit- le unsettling: Just two years earlier, on hose same beaches, I had seen orpses, many corpses, the bodies of oung men and boys rounded up by government-sponsored death squads.



The death-squad goons, like the Sri Lankan government officials who ecruited them, were members of the country's ethnic Sinhalese majority, who mainly people the island's south; he victims were Sinhalese, too, sus- pected of belonging to an ultra-na- ionalist and radically Maoist People's Liberation Front, called (for its Sin- halese initials) the JVP. That aspect of Sri Lanka's now eight-year-long civil war—the abduction and "disappear- ing" of thousands, usually last seen be- ing shoved into green Mitsubishi jeeps—was a horrible sideshow and is mostly over now, except for the Moth- ers Front, a group of nearly 25,000 women campaigning to obtain infor- mation about the dead and the missing.

Elsewhere, away from the beaches, the civil war's central conflict rages on, as I was reminded each morning as I read the papers to the sound of the surf. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an armed rebel fac- tion of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority, were once again escalating their sep- aratist battle. Since 1983, fighting be- tween the Tigers and troops of the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan gov- ernment—Sinhalese make up about 74 percent of Sri Lanka's population; Tamils, 18 percent—has claimed a conservatively estimated 19,000 lives and created, on an is- land of 17 million in- habitants, nearly 1 million refugees.

In May of this year an assassination squad comprised of LTTE guerrillas managed to kill Rajiv Gandhi as he campaigned in southern India. In June, after fourteen months of negotia- tions failed to produce a formal cease-fire, Tamil Tigers overran several police stations in the eastern part of the island, seizing hundreds of officers, and blew up the Sri Lankan govern- ment's defense command center in Colombo, the capital city. During my stay in July, in the country's north, where the Tamil separatists want to form their breakaway nation, LTTE fighters were shooting at air force he- licopters with sophisticated anti-air- craft guns and preparing to lay siege to an army camp at Elephant Pass, through which runs the only road to the large port city of Jaffna, which the Tigers have declared their capital. Rebels once known to use only hit- and-run tactics were now showing the strength and confidence to fight con- ventional battles—which could only mean increased bloodshed. (In Au- gust the Tigers were repulsed from Ele- phant Pass by a relief force of 8,000 Sri Lankan troops, who, by government count, killed 2,300 rebel soldiers.)

Anthony Spaeth lives in New Delhi, where he s completing a novel.

Photograph by Anthony Suau / Black Star

[illegible] everything was
[illegible] beggars for coins
nt German. Tourists hag-
[illegible] vendors over the price of
[illegible]. A small place, an easy peo-
[illegible] and then the reports of startling
ferocity.

One afternoon, as I walked by a beach restaurant selling lobster and Wiener schnitzel, I nearly tripped on something that was protruding from the surf at the water's edge. I thought it was a seashell. It turned out, upon closer inspection, to be a human jawbone, with four molars and several fillings, green from its long immersion in the ocean. A beachcomber helped me examine it; we turned it around with a stick. When I walked away, he walked away, too, leaving it in the sand. It had made its point.

Sri Lanka's story would seem to be one of the world's oldest, and it is often described in this way: two ethnic groups, a majority and a minority, who have never gotten along and never will, until, perhaps, development occurs and "Western values" take hold. But this is not Sri Lanka's story. While Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, is by international standards a poor country, it is the most developed nation in South Asia, with a higher life expectancy and literacy rate and a lower infant-mortality rate than most Third World nations. For centuries its Sinhalese, who are for the most part Buddhists, and its Tamils, who are largely Hindu—there are Christian converts among both groups—got along well enough with each other and with the island's Ceylon Moors (Muslim descendants of Arab traders), mixed-blood Europeans, Malays, and aboriginal Veddas. Moreover, Sri Lanka is a multi-party democracy and has been since obtaining its independence from the British in 1948.

The sad story of Sri Lanka turns out to be a rather unique one, although one can imagine it will not be the last of its kind. It is a story that hinges on the Western parliamentary system taking a dark and ultimately tragic turn—a story [illegible] democratic process's ability to invite animosity as well as ease [illegible] applicable, I think, to all the heterogeneous countries, in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, attempting to go the democratic route, as well as to India, democratic since 1947, where the old parties are crumbling and politicians, in their quest to rally voters, have rediscovered the powers of nationalism and ethnic rivalry to stir the emotions.

The jawbone in the sand summoned for me not only the corpses left behind by the death squads but another relic, far older and larger, one that is appropriately at the very heart of Sri Lanka—far from the lovely beaches and visited each year not just by many Germans but by hundreds of thousands of Sinhalese. I am referring to the rock fortress called Sigiriya. Constructed in A.D. 473 by a Buddhist prince, Kassapa I, it is one of the wonders of South Asia: a flat-topped, 600-foot-tall rock with sheer sides that made it unscalable by hostile forces. Above the jungle, atop this rock—a two-and-a-half-acre site—Kassapa held court for eighteen years among exquisite frescoes and gardens kept watered with the help of an extraordinary underground hydraulics system.

At the base of the rock, surrounding the stairs leading to his palace, Kassapa constructed a statue of a lion. All that remains today are two giant clawed paws. Gone is the lion's head with its huge gaping mouth. Kassapa's custom was to descend from his fortress and emerge from the mouth, his message being: Here is the king of the People of the Lion.

The Sinhalese are Kassapa's children: the People of the Lion. An odd description, it would seem, of a smallish, quiet people; but People of the Lion they became. Sinhalese politicians found the surest path to election was through reviving old myths that could foster fresh prejudices. They rooted around in the past and came upon Kassapa; they began to speak about their special place on the island and used their majority status to begin ruling from the lion's mouth. But the past they ransacked turned out to be a kind of Pandora's box. The lion begat the Tigers, and they, in turn, begat more ferocious Sinhalese lions—the ultra-nationalists who had to be put down, whose relics marred the lovely beaches of paradise.

The Sinhalese locate their [illegible] gins—their origins as the People of the Lion—in the *Mahavamsa*, a chronicle begun 1,400 years ago by a Buddhist monk named Mahanama. The creation myth, as set down in the *Mahavamsa*, begins in India, where the daughter of an Indian king falls in love with a lion. From this union comes twins, including a male child with lion's hands and feet. After killing his lion-father, the boy grows up to be king, but he has an unruly son whom he banishes from his kingdom (identified as Bengal or, possibly, Gujarat). After a long sea journey, the son, named Vijaya, along with 700 followers arrive by ship in Sri Lanka. Simultaneously—the time frame here is the sixth century B.C.—Buddha was uttering his last words in India. He said from his deathbed: "Vijaya, son of King Sinhabahu, is come to Lanka . . . In Lanka, O lord of gods, will my religion be established." Vijaya's nephew, with a queen imported from northern India, spawned the Sinhalese race. Vijaya conquered the aboriginal population, making the Sinhalese the sole rulers of Lanka.

So goes the creation myth of the Sinhalese, and the main themes are clear. The Sinhalese believe in the purity of their descent from Indian royalty—northern Indian royalty. They believe in a unique manifest destiny as Buddha's chosen people—those who saved Therevada Buddhism, the school often called Hinayana, or the "lesser wheel," after it was overwhelmed in India by resurgent Hinduism. Through Sri Lanka the Therevada strain spread to Thailand and Indochina.

Modern historians say the Sinhalese might have blood from northern India but they've found no substantial evidence to support their migration story. The more likely theory is that the Sinhalese are a mixed race with significant input from southern India and Southeast Asia. But this is heresy in Sri Lanka, even today. Schoolchildren are taught as history the saga of Vijaya. Stop a Sri Lankan on the street and ask about Buddha's three trips to the island—which historians consider an impossibility in the sixth century B.C.—and he will rattle off the sites

ddha visited.

Sinhalese who believe these myths y the current problems with the mil minority are an inevitable ex- nsion of the deep past. They tell u how the Tamils came to Sri Lan- later, as usurpers. The Tamils, one told, are Hindus on an island cho- n by Buddha as the sanctuary of his ligion. They are of different blood. hey speak a Dravidian language. hey are from India's south, where day some 43 million Tamils are con- ntrated in the state of Tamil Nadu. hey belong back in India. Add to all us the genuine insecurity of a small, ften-conquered people—Europeans ad taken control of the island's oastal areas by the end of the six- eenth century—and you have the primordial" theory of Sinhalese- amil violence: The island's ethnic roblem goes back into the mists of ime. Even educated Sinhalese, who cknowledge that the myths lack a ard historical basis, argue that the inhalese consciousness has been rmed by 1,400 years of belief in the *Mahavamsa*.

But that argument contains a ma- or flaw. The *Mahavamsa* was for most f history an indecipherable text pro- ected by Buddhist monks—its ac- ounts shaped in couplets and conveyed in Pali, the language of an- ient Buddhism that almost no mod- rn-day Sinhalese can read or com- prehend. Only in 1837 was it "trans- ated" for the average reader by an English civil servant and a Buddhist riest. (Scholars are in the dark as to ow much of the original *Mahavam- sa*, written in the sixth century, was known or taught in oral form prior to 1837.)

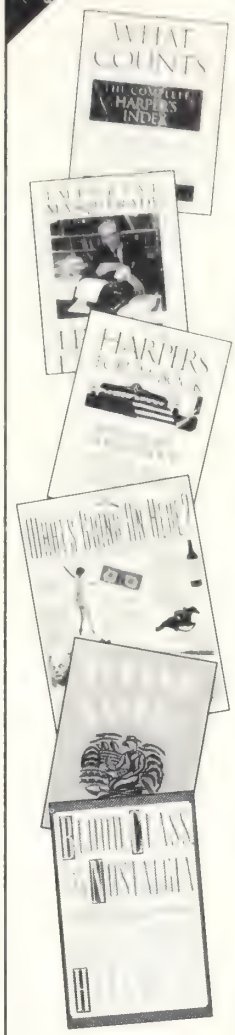
Sri Lankan historians, in particular R.A.L.H. Gunawardena, have traced the history of the Sinhalese identity and concluded that the term "Sin- halese" denoted very different things at different moments throughout his- tory. At first it was a dynastic term: The Sinhalese were those people ruled by various Sinhalese (and sometimes Tamil) kings. By the end of the twelfth century, the term probably denoted Sinhala-speaking peoples. Some his- torians, on thin evidence, have tried to see a Buddhist element to the Sin- halese identity as far back as the sev-

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enteenth century. Gunawardena disagrees, saying it's a twentieth-century incorporation.

The People of the Lion may have been conceived by Prince Vijaya and spawned by his nephew, but it's most doubtful. They were surely rallied by a succession of ancient Sinhalese kings. What *is* quite clear is that as a group with common desires and fears—of the Tamils in particular—they didn't coalesce until the twentieth century, first under the British colonizers, then under the Sinhalese nationalist leaders of the Thirties and Forties, and finally, and most significantly, under the politicians of the post-independence era. The story of the Sinhalese lion—the lion who has rampaged since 1983—does not begin in the forests of 2,500 years ago. It begins in Colombo in 1948, when Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain and the nation's modern political era began.

Outside Colombo's old parliament building, staring at the choppy Indian Ocean, stand five bronze statues in wedge formation. These are the freedom fighters of Sri Lanka, including the country's first three prime ministers. They form a particularly uninspiring monument. Only D. S. Senanayake, the country's first prime minister, shows some verve, trying to stride off his pedestal. The other four men are rendered smaller and in comically sedate poses. Dudley Senanayake, Senanayake's son and successor, has bronze hair parted neatly in the middle, his Western suit coat buttoned over a small paunch. A prewar nationalist stands with hands folded over his groin as if prepared to wait for an eternally delayed bus.

The effect is unintentional but appropriate. Sri Lanka barely had a freedom struggle from the British. None of the "freedom fighters" was ever arrested. As far back as 1908, according to K. M. de Silva in his *History of Sri Lanka*, some Sinhalese despaired of their lack of fight.

> "It is useless to hope to get political privileges without our first agitating for them," a local newspaper, the *Ceylon Morning Leader*, declared in its issue of 13 June 1908. . . . A Sri Lankan who had pressed the subject of constitutional reform on an official in Whitehall had received the blunt reply, "Why don't you agitate for it?"

Sri Lanka's independence in 1948 was a spinoff of the Indian freedom fight, "the process so bland as to be virtually imperceptible to those not directly involved," de Silva writes. Mohandas Gandhi's and Jawaharlal Nehru's popular nationalist vision of a secular, equal India found the weakest of echoes in the liberal sentiments of D. S. Senanayake, who promised the Tamils protection.

When Senanayake died in office in 1952, the democratic process brought Sri Lanka to a crucial point. To wrest power from the ruling United National Party (UNP), breakaway politician S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, an Oxford-educated convert to Buddhism, devised a populist program to snatch the Sinhalese vote. He said in 1955 that he would make Sinhala the official language of Sri Lanka, effectively freezing ambitious Tamils—most of whom were English-speakers and knew no Sinhala—out of treasured government jobs. Bandaranaike was playing to smoldering resentments about the Tamils' educational and professional successes, and he won by a landslide in the 1956 general elections. Shortly thereafter Sinhala was made the nation's official language, and ethnic tension was transformed from a matter of manners—a private problem between individuals—to a political issue. After he was shot by a Buddhist monk in 1959—partly over a business deal—Bandaranaike's widow, Sirimavo, took over his Sri Lanka Freedom Party, or SLFP. The democratic process continued (with a single glitch in 1982, when the seated parliament won a six-year extension in a dubious referendum). Power shuttled between Mrs. Bandaranaike's party and the UNP, led by former prime minister and then president Junius Jayewardene and, since 1988, by the current president, Ranasinghe Premadasa. Whatever their policy differences, both parties have all along sought to win elections by appealing to Sinhalese nationalist sentiments.

Bandaranaike and Jayewardene claimed to be modern, democratic

eaders accountable to the electoral rocess. At the same time, however, hey posed as latter-day Sinhalese ıonarchs. Bandaranaike, the daugh- er of a chieftain in Kandy, the Sin- ıalese religious center, patronized ırticular Buddhist temples and put he country on an ancient, lunar cal- ndar for several confusion-filled ıonths. Jayewardene promised a *Dharmista* ("righteous") state, dressed ıimself in priest-like native dress, nd updated the *Mahavamsa*, a tra- litional duty of the righteous Sin- ıalese king. Their propagandists elentlessly beat the drum of Sin- ıalese dominance, Sinhalese purity, Sinhalese solidarity, taking old hemes from the *Mahavamsa* and dding two new ideas, which became ıtal parts of the newly reconstitut- d People of the Lion.

The first was the concept of the Aryan race, which was imported from Europe in the nineteenth and early wentieth centuries. The idea is now lisputed: that affinity in languages de- ıotes an actual "race" of Indo-Aryans. But the theory has had a profound ef- ect in Sri Lanka. Sanskrit scholar Max Müller declared that he could class the idioms spoken in Iceland ınd Ceylon as cognate dialects of the Aryan family of languages." This not ınly placed little Sri Lanka in the glamorous Aryan family but made it he final point, to the east, of the Aryan race's long journey. This was mportant to a people who, even to- lay, are pained to be considered in- significant in the world; who cringe when they are lumped, as they are in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, with obscure tribes like the Mas- sachutoes and the Tromberts.

And the theory seemed to validate the Sinhalese creation myth. For how else did the Aryan language leap the vast Dravidian south of India but by coming on a boat with Vijaya or some other north Indian migrant? (In fact, modern academic opinion is mixed on whether Sinhala is an Indo-Euro- pean or a Dravidian language.)

The second new theme was of In- dian "expansionism" and the threat to the Sinhalese. Centuries of cross invasions between Sri Lanka and In- dia, along with colonization by three European powers (Portugal, the

You deserve a factual look at...

Myths About Israel and the Middle East (2)

Should we re-examine endlessly repeated clichés?

In a previous installment in this series of clarifying messages about Israel and the Middle East, we examined certain myths which, by dint of constant repetition, had acquired currency and acceptance. We looked at the myth of "Palestinian nationhood", the myth of the Gaza Strip and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") being "occupied territory", the myth that Jewish settlements in these territories are "the greatest obstacle to peace", and the myth that Israel is unwilling to "yield land for peace". And we cleared up the greatest myth of all, namely that Israel's administration of the territories and not Arab determination to destroy the state, is the root cause of the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. But these are not all the myths; there are more.

What are some of these myths?

■ **Myth:** The Arabs of Israel are a persecut ed minority without civil and political rights.
Reality: The 700,000 non-Jews (mostly Arabs) who are citizens of Israel have the same civil rights that Jews have. They vote, are members of the Knesset (parliament), and are part of Israel's civil and diplomatic services. Arabs have full access to the Israeli legal, health and educational systems, including Arabic and Moslem universities. The only difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews is that the Jews must serve three years in the military and at least one month a year until age of 50. The Arabs have no such obligation. For them, military service is voluntary. But, very few avail themselves of the privilege.
■ **Myth:** Israel should give up Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") because strategic depth is meaningless in this age of missiles.
Reality: Israel is a mini-state – about half the size of San Bernardino county in California. If another, even smaller mini-state were carved out of it, Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the opinion of 100 retired U.S. generals, and admirals as conveyed to the President of the U.S. If the Arabs were to occupy whatever little strategic depths Israel has between the Jordan River and its populated coast, they would not need any missiles. Artillery and mortars would suffice, since Israel would be only nine miles wide at its waist. Those who urge such a course either do not understand the situation or have a death wish for Israel.
■ **Myth:** If Israel would allow a Palestinian state to arise in Judea/Samaria and in the Gaza Strip it would be a democratic state and would be totally demilitarized.
Reality: There is no prospect at all that anything resembling a democratic state could be created. There is not a single democratic Arab state – all of them are tyrannies of varying degrees. Even today, under Israeli administration, the PLO, the Islamic fundamentalists, and other factions fight for supremacy and ruthlessly murder each other. A country torn apart by civil strife like Lebanon is likely to be a much better prospect. As for demilitarization, it is totally unlikely that – with Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, all of which are in a declared state of war with Israel at its borders – a power vacuum would be possible. Despite pious promises, the arms merchants of the world would find a great new market and the neighboring hostile Arab countries would be happy to supply anything else that might be needed.
■ **Myth:** Israel should make "confidence building" gestures for the sake of peace.
Reality: What really is it that the world expects Israel to do for the sake of peace? Twenty-one of the 22 Arab countries consider themselves in a state of war with Israel and don't even recognize its "existence". That has been going on for over 43 years. Wouldn't it be about time that the Arabs made some kind of a "gesture"? Could they not for instance terminate the state of war? Could they not finally abolish the economic boycott against Israel that has been in place for over 40 years – long before Israel came into the administration of the "West Bank"? Could they not stop the yearly charade of attempting the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations? Could they not withdraw that slanderous resolution ramroded about 16 years ago through the General Assembly of the United Nations that Zionism, the liberation movement of the Jewish people, is racism? Any single one of these would be such a "gesture", but none is forthcoming.

It appears likely that, sometime quite soon perhaps, the parties to the Mid-East conflict – Israel, the Arab nations, and the Arab residents of Judea/Samaria and the Gaza Strip – will finally get together in a peace conference. And chances are that all the old clichés will be trotted out, all the old myths resurrected in order to pressure Israel to make "concessions". Israel is America's staunchest ally and certainly its only true ally in that area of the world. It is in our national interest that stark reality, not myths, govern any peace negotiations.

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Netherlands, and England), have made the Sri Lankans understandably fearful of dominance. An almost Oedipal insecurity has developed in regard to India, combining a pride in northern Indian ancestry with the fear of conquest and the anguish of being overshadowed. (The allure of the Aryan theory to the Sinhalese is, in part, an at- tempt to claim a different patrimony.)

The politicians of the post-independence era combined all of these themes into a siren song to Sinhalese voters. Sinhalese purity; Buddhist piety; fear of dominance by two groups of Tamil Indians: those living across the narrow Palk Strait and those on the island. Foremost among the fear-raisers was Cyril Mathew, an influential UNP propagandist and cabinet minister in Jayewardene's government. He indefatigably warned that the Sri Lankan Tamils would eventually "subjugate" the Sinhalese by linking with the Tamils of southern India. The Tamils had a homeland they could always return to, Mathew said over and over again. The Sinhalese had nowhere else to go but their little island.

Thus did a new People of the Lion grow, fed by a completely modern idea: that the two ethnic groups, despite centuries of peaceful co-existence and commingling, somehow didn't "fit" in Sri Lanka. The idea began in 1956, when it was felt that there weren't enough government jobs for both Sinhalese and Tamils. Then it expanded: The Sinhalese and Tamils didn't "fit" into the island's economy or, finally, on the island itself.

In India Nehru's Congress Party saw a national future in bridging the castes and religious groups; in Sri Lanka the politicians saw only the electoral strategy of building a united Sinhalese voting bloc. In India the Congress Party worked at a healthy, new myth of Indian identity; the Sri Lankan politicians revived dangerous old Sinhalese myths of purity, dominance, and vulnerability. Almost inevitably, Tamil pleas for language parity and autonomy grew into a movement for an independent "Eelam," to be situated in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern provinces. The movement was led by several separatist groups, but by the early 1980s [illegible] were eclipsed by the Liberation Tige[illegible] of Tamil Eelam. The tiger is a dete[illegible] minedly southern Indian symbol [illegible] power and ferocity—a counter to th[illegible] Sinhalese lion.

And by the 1980s a new People [illegible] the Lion had matured to take on th[illegible] Tigers. The battle was set to com[illegible] mence. On July 23, 1983, Tamil gue[illegible] rillas ambushed Sinhalese soldiers i[illegible] the north and killed thirteen of them[illegible] In reaction, Sinhalese attacked Tam[illegible] homes and businesses throughout th[illegible] island, even in Colombo. Neighbor[illegible] who had lived peacefully for genera[illegible] tions became violent enemies. On th[illegible] third day of rioting, President Jayewar[illegible] dene spoke on television for four an[illegible] a half minutes and said, less tha[illegible] soothingly, "The time has come t[illegible] accede to the clamor and the natura[illegible] respect of the Sinhalese people." Hun[illegible] dreds of Tamils were killed in a week[illegible] of violence, and a peaceful country[illegible] entered into a civil war.

"This Is the Truth" is the name o[illegible] a government pamphlet, released in[illegible] 1983, which purported to explain the[illegible] conflagration. It is a strange docu[illegible] ment: a state paper condemning the[illegible] advances made by the Tamil minori[illegible] ty in education and business during[illegible] the twentieth century and, in effect,[illegible] justifying violence against them. More[illegible] such documents followed. Contradic[illegible] tory statistics flooded forth from var[illegible] ious interested groups, showing how[illegible] the Tamils had been pampered by the[illegible] British or subjugated by the govern[illegible] ment. History was twisted, and both[illegible] communities started destroying arti[illegible] facts and records that lessened their[illegible] cause.

The Tigers of Eelam dug in and[illegible] continued their disciplined fight[illegible] against the state, stockpiling aston[illegible] ishing amounts of arms—paid for, it[illegible] has been reported, with gold extort[illegible] ed from better-off Tamils. President[illegible] Jayewardene altered his already com[illegible] plex image. "The old fox," as he was[illegible] known in political circles, the mod[illegible] ernizer of the Sri Lankan economy[illegible] and the leader of a "righteous" Bud[illegible] dhist society, added a martial element[illegible] to his pseudo-monarchy. He armed[illegible] the People of the Lion, building up[illegible] the country's toy army into a reason[illegible] ably powerful fighting force. In 1987

decided to conquer the Tamil insurgents once and for all. He sent his army to the rebel strongholds in the north. India became alarmed: A massacre of Sri Lankan Tamils would cause an uproar in southern India.

Among the more remarkable artifacts in modern Sri Lankan history are the photos of Rajiv Gandhi's killing. He is shown facedown in the dust, clothes ripped off, brain oozing from his skull. Another photo shows the remains of his female assassin: an upper torso and head surrounded by four disembodied arms and legs. The killing was committed in southern India, but it was a Sri Lankan crime. Those who plotted and carried out the assassination were members of the LTTE. Some say the LTTE was afraid Gandhi would come back to power and cause them trouble; others say it was a vengeance killing for his policies against the Tigers in 1987.

The photos, taken moments after the bomb that killed Gandhi exploded, have a kind of precursor. A picture taken on July 29, 1987, shows an honor guard of Sri Lankan sailors at attention. One sees crisp uniforms and caps, but also a rifle butt swinging from the middle of the guard. The rifle had just bounced off the neck and shoulder of Rajiv Gandhi, then prime minister of India. Gandhi was a graceful young man: The photo captures him a split second after the attack, bent slightly, legs crossed and left arm swung to the rear as if in the middle of an athletic dance step.

Minutes before, Gandhi had signed with President Jayewardene the Indo–Sri Lankan accord of 1987, which was designed to end Sri Lanka's bitter civil war with a large dose of help from India. The accord forced the Sri Lankan government to formally acknowledge that Sri Lanka was multiethnic and multi-lingual and to accept both Tamil and English as official languages—for the first time since 1956. Further, it called for political autonomy for the Tamil-dominated Northern and Eastern provinces. Indian troops would be sent to Sri Lanka to protect Tamils and gather weapons from the Tigers, who had agreed to disarm.

To diplomats and journalists, the accord seemed fair to the Tamils and courageous on the part of the Sri Lankan government. India landed 15,000 troops. The Indian troops swelled to 45,000 when the Tamils reneged on the disarmament. Over the ensuing three years, the Indian Army, the world's fourth largest, would bog down in the north and lose more than 1,000 soldiers to the minority they had come to Sri Lanka to protect. The truce utterly failed.

The Sinhalese were not wholly disappointed with this failure—far from it. From the beginning, many Sinhalese viewed the accord as nothing less than a national nightmare. Their ancient fears of invasion from the north, fanned for decades by political propagandists, were realized. Significantly, the rifle was swung at Gandhi not by a fanatically fierce Tamil separatist but by a twenty-two-year-old Sinhalese.

During the summer and into the fall of 1987, President Jayewardene could be seen regularly on Sri Lankan television explaining why the accord with India was the best thing for the People of the Lion. Soon, a voice from the jungle rose to oppose him, calling for the destruction of all Jayewardene stood for. It was a disembodied voice, heard on audiotapes and over covert radio broadcasts, and it spoke a language of primitive violence.

The novelist Paul Bowles lived on an island off the southern Sri Lankan coast in the early 1950s. "Buddhism," he wrote, "with its gentle agnosticism and luxuriant sadness, is so right in Ceylon that you feel it could have been born here, could have grown up out of the soil like the forests." In those inland forests, however, he stumbled across the non-Buddhist side of the People of the Lion. The drums of devil dancers sounded from the mainland at night, and Bowles and his wife would swim to shore to attend the rituals.

> These ancient, pre-Buddhist ceremonies were once of prime importance to the community, and although they have degenerated over the centuries into what is widely despised as a vestige of primitive "superstition," a really good dancer can still revive the old gods and



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bring shivers to the watcher. . . . The most impressive rites take place in the palm forest. . . . Here in the dark, the howling masked figures leaping with their flaming torches among the trees achieve their full dramatic effect. Nominally a devil dance is a magical observance whose aim is to banish the demons of pain, psychosis and bad luck by inducing such terror in the subject that he will automatically expel them—a rudimentary shock treatment.

Sri Lanka's political jungle had its own devil dancers: a covert, leftist Sinhalese group that, off and on, had made its home in the Sri Lankan jungle for twenty years. Its name was the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna. After the Indo–Sri Lankan accord was signed in 1987, the JVP began its drums and dance—its own shock treatment for the foundering society.

The history of the JVP is largely that of a single man, Patabandi Don Nadasiri Wijeweera, better known by his nom de guerre, Rohana Wijeweera (literally, "the victorious hero from southern Sri Lanka"). He was the son of a Communist Party worker and studied in Moscow in the early 1960s. On his return, he rejected Soviet-style communism and started the JVP in 1967. He grew a beard and sported a red-starred beret, which lent him a close resemblance to Che Guevara.

Ideologically, the JVP was part Marx, part Mao, part Castro. Wijeweera also studied—and taught to his cadres—the Sinhalese chauvinist writings of Cyril Mathew, the United National Party propagandist, and his views on Indian expansionism and Sinhalese vulnerability. In April 1971, the JVP tried to lead an insurrection against the government of Sirmavo Bandaranaike by attacking police stations throughout the south of the country. A communications error bungled the plan. Bandaranaike declared a state of emergency and cracked down on the JVP with sickening brutality. The government killed thousands and arrested many thousands more over the next three weeks.

Wijeweera was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment but was later released. He went mainstream, contesting general elections in 1977 and even running for president in 1982. The JVP was almost a spe force until the accord was signed wi India. Then the JVP changed its spo once again, dropping its Marxi rhetoric in favor of anti-governmer anti-Indian, ultra-nationalist pos tions, and these struck a resoundin ly resonant chord. In the perio between July 1987 and Novemb 1989, the JVP gained an astonishir amount of public support. The Si halese people were not looking for socialist revolution, although the JV did draw its main support from ur employed youth in the depresse coastal areas of the south. The drun of the JVP spoke to a dark side of th People of the Lion. The JVP would c what the political process had faile to do: exorcise from Sri Lanka n only the Indian troops and the Tami but, first and foremost, the goverr ment of Jayewardene that had agree to the accord.

Wijeweera, from hiding, release audiocassettes lambasting the gov ernment and calling for a boycott c all Indian goods. He started a selec tive assassination campaign aimed a terrorizing more moderate Sinhales JVP guerrillas shot government em ployees, vendors selling pro-goverr ment newspapers, trishaw drivers wh bought Indian vehicles. The em ployees of the government-owne television station were advised to qu or die, along with the staffs of Indi an-owned hotels. Then the strike began: The JVP would scrawl a warn ing on a wall or slip a leaflet under government-office door, and all busi ness would shut down on the south ern coast, sometimes for weeks Wijeweera, deciding the military wa the key to overthrowing the goverr ment, infiltrated it with supporter and called on them to rebel i November 1988. Diplomats i Colombo talked about the rise of new Pol Pot.

In December 1988 Ranasinghe Pre madasa succeeded Jayewardene a president. He called for negotiation with the JVP, but they failed. So, af ter a warning, he allowed the militar to wipe out the group in any way i wished. The military dispatched deat squads to villages in the island's cen ter and around the southern coast plucking from streets and homes an

uths who were suspected of having
ıks with the JVP. The death squads
orked mostly at night. In the early
orning bodies of young men and
ys would appear on beaches, in
vers, burned to death in small town
uares. There was virtually no public
ıtcry over the slaughter.

"I said then: 'I'll clamp the emer-
ncy.'" President Premadasa recalled
a recent speech. " 'But remember,
ıder the emergency the security
rces will get a free hand to imple-
ent certain measures to restore
ace in the country, which I won't be
ble to help. In that event, please
on't call for statistics once the job is
ne.'"

The JVP was weakened by the
grom. They never did drive India's
oops from Sri Lanka. The last Indi-
ı soldiers left in March 1990—their
sk unfulfilled and Rajiv Gandhi no
nger in power. The Tamils had driv-
ı the Indian Army away, creating
r India a kind of Vietnam.

A few months earlier, in November
989, security forces had discovered
ohana Wijeweera on a comfortable
lanter's estate in the south. They ar-
sted him and he died violently a few
ours later. The army says he was shot
y one of his comrades. Many Sri
ankans believe he was killed by sol-
iers on the grounds of the Colombo
olf Club. His body was cremated
swiftly. With him, most an-
alysts believe, died the JVP.

For the past two years the govern-
ıent has concentrated on fighting
ıe separatist LTTE. Each battle brings
ew evidence of the Tamils' military
ophistication and adds to the sense
hat no end to the bloody civil war is
ı sight.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa
as publicly stated that not all Tamils
re terrorists, considered a bighearted
esture from a Sinhalese politician.
He believes that military operations
vill eventually force the LTTE to ac-
ept the accord of 1987. It is difficult
o share Premadasa's faith. The Tigers'
ire power in the battle for Elephant
Pass amazed the Sri Lankan military.
A top general said last summer that
he LTTE could no longer be consid-
red a guerrilla army; they were a "reg-

Continued on page 78



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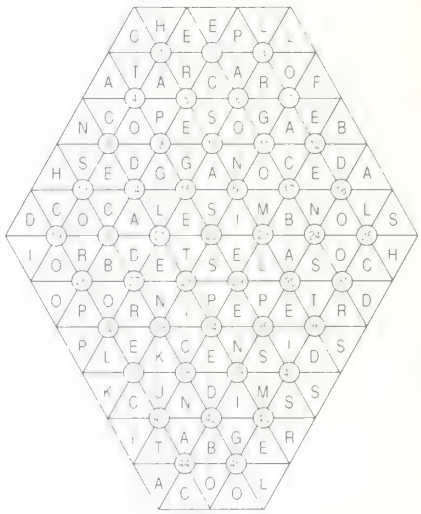
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Continued from page 75

ular" army.

On August 29, the government launched a large-scale offensive against ten jungle camps where the Tamil Tigers are believed to be building and training their revamped army. Discovered by the Sri Lankan military in late July, the camps, according to a senior Sri Lankan military officer, included factories for manufacturing mortars, rockets, and other ammunition, along with classrooms and high walls to practice scaling. Fighting in and around the camps in early September was reported to be especially fierce.

Premadasa is even more energetic than his predecessors in cultivating the image of a Sinhalese monarch—in his case, a Buddhist king. His swearing-in was more like a coronation. He's famous for the bo trees he plants across the country. (Buddha reached enlightenment under a bo tree.) He stage-manages bizarre events for the front pages of the pro-government newspapers. In February he announced on national TV that his government had "discovered" the Vallipuram plate, a 3 1/2-inch piece of inscribed gold that may prove the Sinhalese ruled all of Sri Lanka, including the Tamil areas, as long ago as the second century. (In fact, the Vallipuram plate was discovered in the 1930s, fully documented in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* in 1939, exhibited in London in 1982, and *returned* to Sri Lanka last February.)

During my visit in July, the *Daily News* had on its front page one day a photo of Premadasa pointing to the sky, which contained a three-quarter moon in the shape of Sri Lanka. The newspaper called it a "possibly unprecedented phenomenon" and quoted people calling it "a miracle." The newspaper declared that the phenomenon "augered well" for the government, the security forces, and the country (in that order). The photo caption read: "President Ransinghe Premadasa points to the phenomenon which he was the first to glimpse."

Some call Premadasa the "Sinhalese Khomeini." Perhaps not. As I write, in mid-September, Premadasa is fighting off an impeachment motion in the parliament. The members bringing the motion have cited twenty-four cases of corruption and illegal family deals, but Premadasa's ability to wheel and deal in the backroom may well prevent his ousting.

Whether Premadasa (or a successor) succeeds in forcing the LTTE to the negotiating table, or in crushing them, or in magnanimously affording the non-militant Tamils equality and a measure of autonomy, there's a strong sense in Sri Lanka that the country is too insecure and too traumatized to ever return to normal. The lion begat the tiger, and paradise became a bloody jungle. ■

November Index Sources

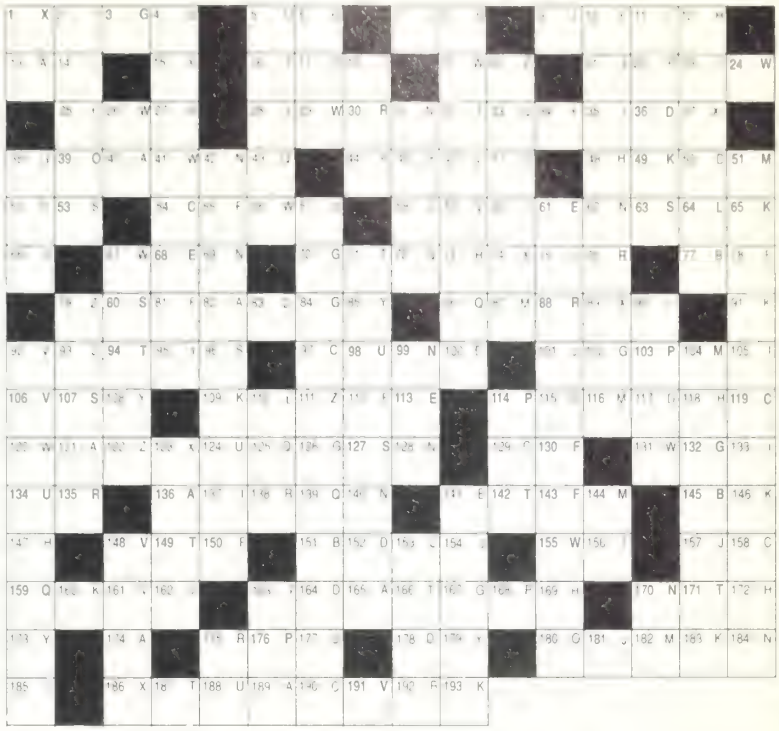
1,2 Citizens for Tax Justice (Washington); **3** Associated Press (Miami); **4** U.S. Congressional Subcommittee on Financial Institutions Supervision, Regulation, and Insurance; **5** U.S. Bureau of the Census; **6** John P. Caskey, Swarthmore College (Swarthmore, Pa.); **7,8** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis/Jeff Madrick, NBC (N.Y.C.); **9** U.S. Senator Tom Harkin; **10** Barbara Bush Press Office (Washington); **11** Wheat Foods Council (Englewood, Colo.); **12,13** National Football League (N.Y.C.)/*Harper's* research; **14** Daniel J. Edelman, Inc. (Chicago); **15** Roper Organization (N.Y.C.); **16** BertSherm Products (Cleveland); **17** Baltimore City Police; **18** U.S. General Accounting Office/*Harper's* research; **19** Centers for Disease Control (Atlanta); **20,21** Randy Albelda, University of Massachusetts (Boston); **22** *Harper's* research; **23** CBS (N.Y.C.); **24** Nielsen Media Research (N.Y.C.)/Jim Drake, *Night Court* (Tarzana, Calif.)/*Harper's* research; **25** Gallup Organization (Princeton, N.J.); **26** IMS America (Plymouth Meeting, Pa.)/SRX (San Francisco); **27,28** Roper Organization (N.Y.C.); **29** Dow Jones & Company (N.Y.C.); **30** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis; **31** Warwick Baker & Fiore (N.Y.C.); **32** Le Cirque (N.Y.C.); **33** Gallagher's (N.Y.C.); **34** *60 Minutes* (N.Y.C.); **35** Murray Feshbach, Georgetown University (Washington); **36** Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press (Washington); **37** *Wall Street Journal*–NBC News poll (Washington); **38** Consumer Products Safety Commission (Bethesda, Md.); **39** National Endowment for the Arts (Washington); **40** Hobby Industry Association of America (Elmwood Park, N.J.)/U.S. Bureau of the Census.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 107

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: The first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 75.



CLUES

WORDS

A. Contiguous

13 165 136 174 82

189 121 40

B. Timber wolves

151 77 145 8 6

C. Filled with people, jammed

119 129 97 54 158 190

D. Putting an end to

17 50 83 36 164 117 152 178

100

E. Large, extinct, flightless bird of the pigeon family; dimwit

61 141 113 68

F. Eng. painter, writer of nonsense (1812–88; full name)

112 150 25 143 130 16 81 55

10 78

G. Russian-American actress (1879–1945); leading interpreter of Ibsen

38 132 126 102 84 167 70 3

H. Winked

48 118 172 169 73 147 12 27

I. Japanese shrub of the rose family, having hairy clusters of white flowers (2 wds.)

18 35 90 95 137 105 60 163

33 2 23 11 185

J. Minced oath; the deuce! the devil! egad!

101 181 21 28 157 93 154 9

7

K. In the way, hindering

146 91 160 65 193 109 49 45

183

L. Form of trapshooting

14 153 110 75 64

M. Cozily warm

182 51 87 116 104 144

N. Stealthily treacherous or deceitful

99 69 140 184 128 42 31

170

O. Pushed gently

47 39 66 180 115 52

P. Characterized by vocal fullness and clarity

22 103 176 114 168 20 44

Q. Eternal

33 43 159 72 125 139 86

R. Moves with an unsteady gait

88 138 76 135 175 192 30

S. Nocturnal lemur of Madagascar (hyph.)

107 96 127 63 53 80

T. "Sort of mind, That never ___ of the eye of a saint" (2 wds., Yeats, "The Seven Sages")

32 187 71 142 149 166 94 171

156

U. Calligraphy

124 134 4 177 98 162 5 57

V. Sequoia

59 161 106 148 92 46 191

W. Drinking

56 131 29 26

X. Escape

74 89 186

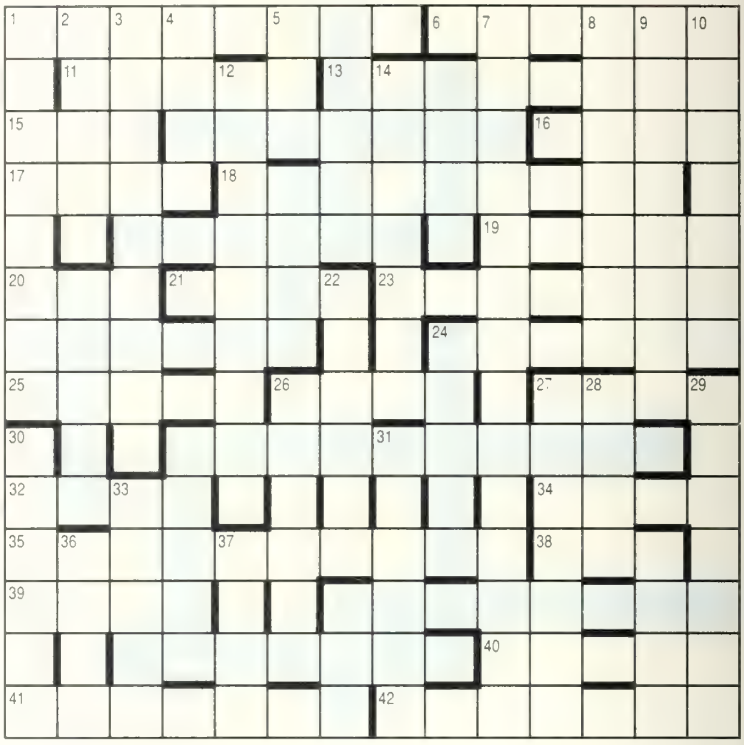
Y. Big and strong

173 83

Z. Observe; understand (Brit.)

117

PUZZLE



Crosses

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr. (with acknowledgments to Mass of Crossword *magazine)*

The crosses in the shaded areas are unclued and must be determined.

Clue answers include less than common words at 19A, 24A, 9D, and 12D, and one foreign word; six answers are capitalized words. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 75.

Across

1. Indian church I very quietly fear upsetting (8)
6. Medicinal tincture for broken crania (6)
11. Incomparable? That's a lot of baloney (5)
13. Supporter of leading mafioso, intermittently (8, *three words*)
15. Nothing left but first nickel (3)
16. Small boat's back-up yard pole (4)
17. This culture's odd characters (4)
18. Pay bill U.S. rendered as likely as not (9)
19. I circle back around ridge to find antelope (5)
20. One letter in Greek and most of the rest in Latin (3)
21. Teen dancing? This is how free sex gets started (4)
23. Italian food I cut in squares (7)
24. Early Palestinian, a volatile constituent but no Conservative (6)
25. Discharge leader of economic venture (5)
26. Bear Latin grammar finally in this country (4)
27. More than half of a document conferring a privilege for the crown (4)
32. Considering the premises, form for work (4)
34. Drag racer—no laugh—stepped on it (4)
35. Reliable workers enjoy menu arranged around ribs primarily (10)
38. True black bull, if you listen (3)
39. Beginning to scratch back, doesn't go straight? (4)
40. Agitates thousands about nothing (5)
41. Incur no changes here…this is a cross too! (7)
42. Can Eastern European focus during a spring celebration? (7)

Down

1. Tangible [illegible]
2. Laughs about the Italian calls for attention (5)
3. Sues Galli, confused by unfair treatments (9, *hyph.*)
4. Apple, for instance, set up work by mechanical engineer (4)
5. Brew with no head and always short (3)
7. Star on door—may I get thrown out listening to the stars? (14, *two words*)
8. Vain lookers said to be put on a pedestal (7)
9. Boy, trance almost wrecked old orgy participant (8)
10. Wine, say, goes bad in various ways (7)
12. Like a kidney disease inflicted on pitcher (9)
14. Telephoned message about union leader—dope turned up mistake (7, *two words*)
22. Remove section of femur—physician's con game (6)
26. Optimistic pub: drunk with exotic tea (6)
27. Snipes at small payment, upsetting rest of the race? (7, *two words*)
28. In the streets, do away with adult first (4)
29. Lend or sell stocks to apply certification (7)
30. Due to be relocated around Java, cut off with memory disorder (6, *two words*)
31. Metallic element—could become miasmous around arsenic (6)
33. Gee, you two seize eye, speaking for Italian designer (5)
36. Oriental smuggled Mediterranean port (4)
37. It's forbidden to pick up onion I dropped (4, *hyph.*)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Crosses," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the January 1992 issue. Winners of the September puzzle, "Ciphers," are David and Patricia Bender, New York, New York; Margaret Bond, Redwood City, California; and Cecelia Chapman Justice, McLean, Virginia.

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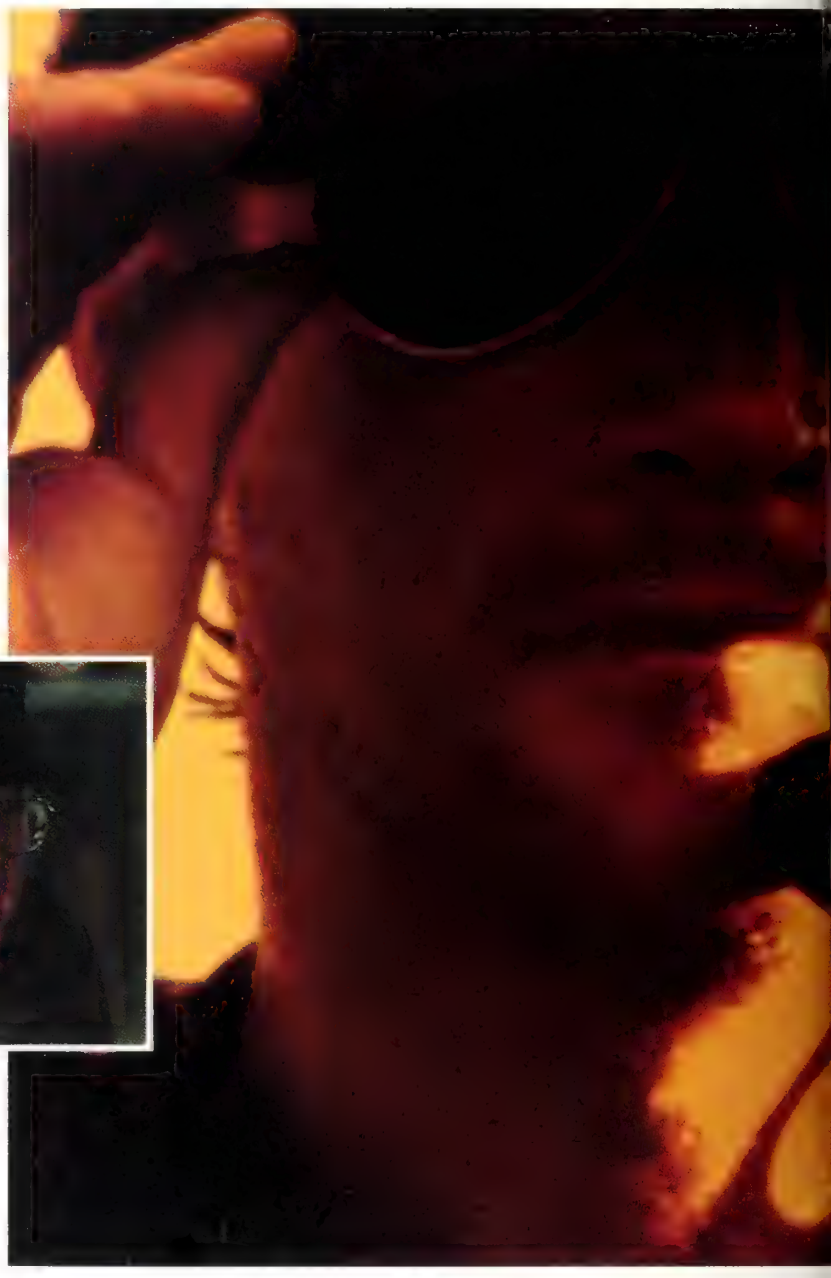
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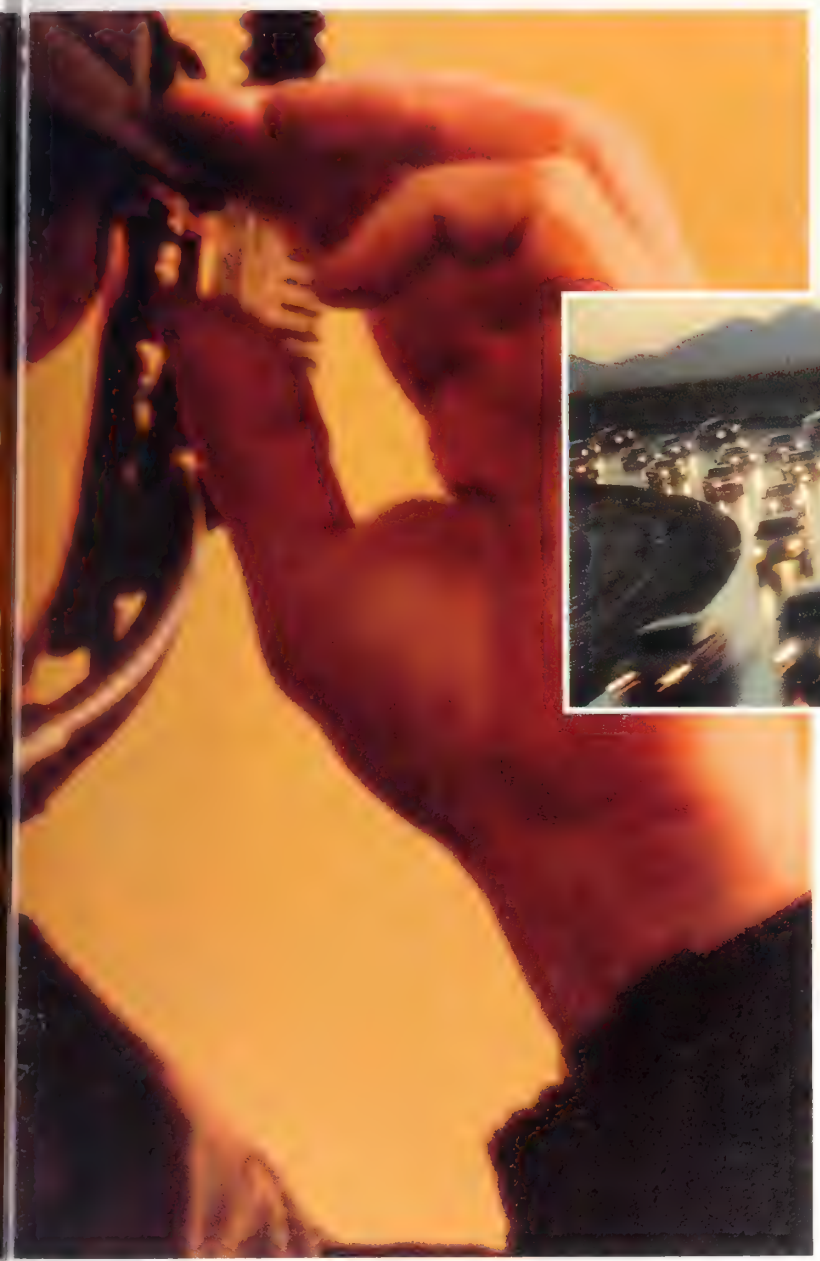
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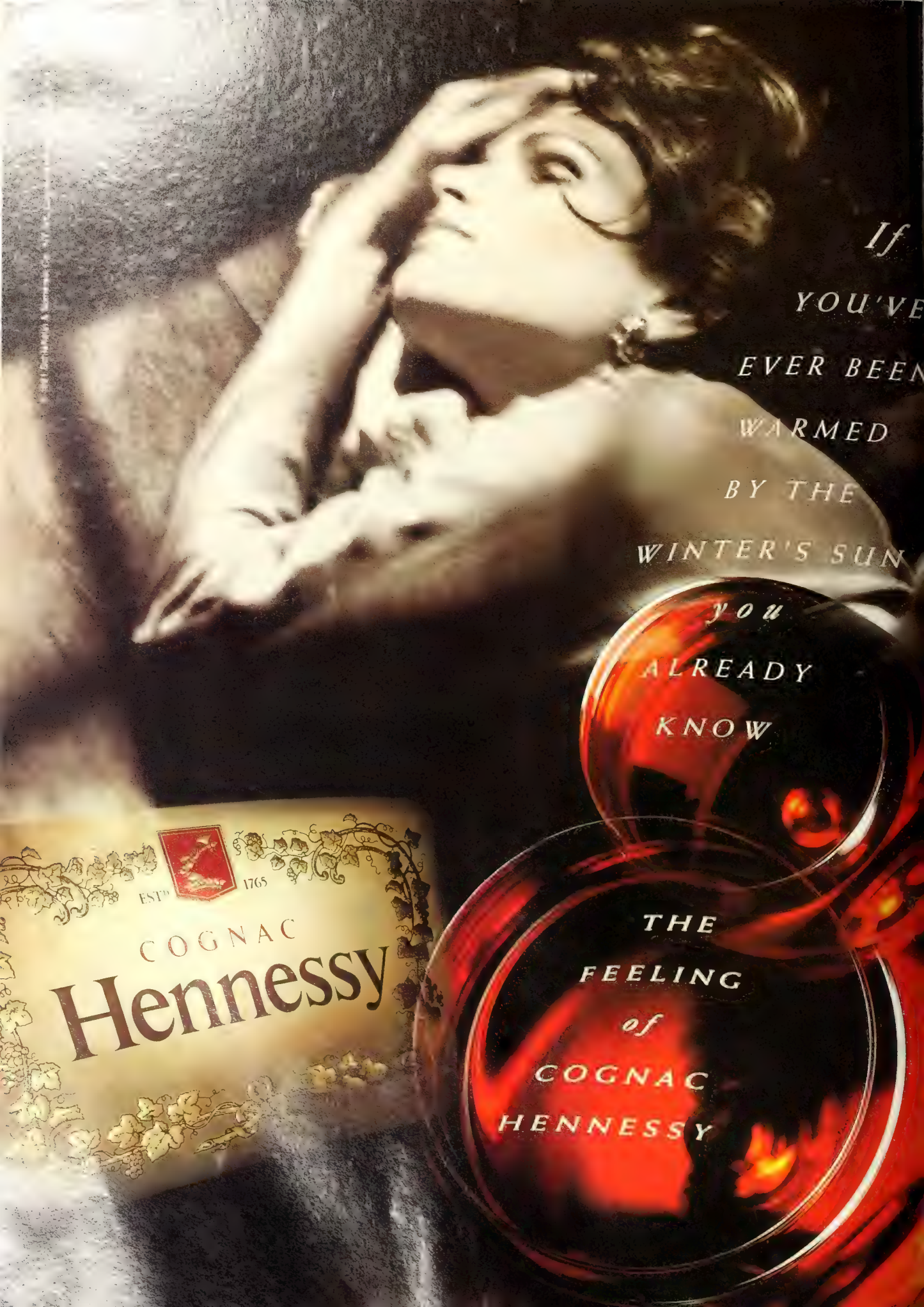
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LETTERS

Animal Rights, Wronged

Vicki Hearne is so wrapped up in defining happiness for Drummer, her Airedale ["What's Wrong with Animal Rights," September], that she neglects to examine the most crucial argument advanced by proponents of animal rights. Despite Hearne's complaint, it is only the most extreme animal-rights activists who suggest that domestic pets be "phased out." The remainder of those concerned with the plight of animals, like myself, focus instead on what Hearne only alludes to: suffering.

Few would agree that training a show dog or putting a horse to work is cruel. Surely Hearne takes good care of her own dog, as do most pet owners. Countless acts of animal neglect do exist, however, and are preventable. The wanton destruction of laboratory rats to test cosmetics or the obsessive shooting of cats to study gunshot wounds *is* cruel and unusual. These blatant abuses outrage the majority of animal-rights activists and fuel their sympathies. Much as it may surprise Hearne, these activists are not losing sleep over her playing fetch with her loyal Drummer.

Furthermore, Hearne twists logic when she suggests that since the Humane Society destroys animals, the entire animal-rights movement is rotten to the core. This is old, tire rhetoric. The Humane Society de stroys unwanted animals so that the will not suffer. Moreover, by writin that "the wild is not a suffering-fre zone," Hearne infers that any pain a animal incurs in a domestic situatio (home or laboratory) is somehow, i her view, legitimated. Here, she fails t isolate intention from her clever "ca culus of suffering." Does Mother Na ture *intend* to hurt, maim, and kill, are these effects simply part of a lar er cyclical design? Clearly the answe is the latter. The wolf tears apart th frail and sick caribou not only to er sure its own survival but to maintai the balance of nature. Humankin however, is not compelled to sho the monkey. Must we infect, injur and inject in our quest for luscious li stick, thicker eyelashes, more efficie handguns? Does this research ensu our survival? Although some anim experimentation does provide usef data, much of it provides only supe fluous pain for animals.

True, the notion of animal righ per se is troubling: Who really knov what animals desire or need? Althoug Hearne pretends to possess the secre of the animal world, the truth is th we will never know the true essence animal happiness. No human is Do tor Doolittle. No one, not even th dog lovers among us, can speak to for animals' sensibilities. But does th insurmountable communication ga permit us to act without empathy? T disregard decency and common sens If animal suffering can be prevente without significant detriment to wha

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced; volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

er useful scientific knowledge ani-
al testing purports to produce, then
rhaps our own species will have pro-
essed.

han Gilsdorf
aton Rouge, La.

In order for a human or an animal have rights, says Vicki Hearne, that iman or animal must be involved a reciprocal relationship with the urce of the right and must be able to ive a knowledge of the reciprocal naracter of the relationship. Ani-als, she argues, can never under-and rights and responsibilities to the egree necessary for them to be rights-olders. If we accept this theory, how-ver, we must then reject rights for ery young children and the mental-deranged or incompetent, because ney, too, cannot have sufficiently aborate conceptions of rights and sponsibilities. Hearne is unable to dmit that we might include children r incompetents among rights-holders mply because they are human, be-ause that begs the question of hether we are morally justified in enying rights to nonhumans only be-ause they happen to belong to a dif-erent species.

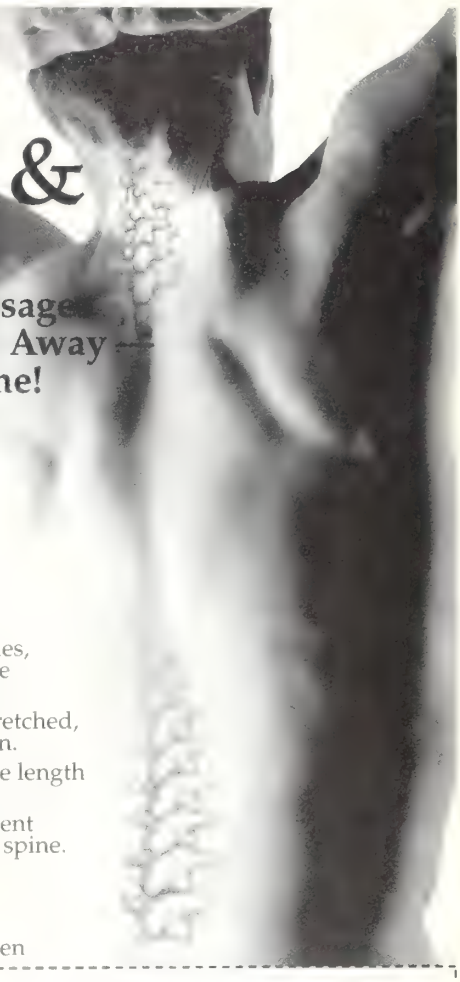
Hearne also argues that the ani-nal-rights movement is built upon he misconceived premise that rights vere intended to prevent animals from nnecessary suffering. In truth, the asis of animal-rights theory has less o do with the prevention of suffering han with the recognition of the in-nerent value of the animal's life irre-pective of whether that life is of any enefit to anyone other than the an-mal.

Gary L. Francione
Professor of Law and Director,
Animal Rights Law Clinic
Rutgers University
Newark

Happiness, as dog trainer Vicki Hearne defines it, comes to animals in the course of being trained and "get-ting it right." Thus, the draft horse is happy only when it strains against an unbearable weight, and the trained rhino is happy only when it perches on a tiny stool and mimics ballet steps. What Hearne has recognized, and then twisted, is the very real desire of some animals to please humans. Rowlf, in Richard Adams's *The Plague Dogs*, puzzles about why the whitecoats drown and revive him over and over again. He finally hits upon an explanation: He was trying to "get it right," but he just couldn't. Hearne's hellish, whitecoat logic is as follows: Animals like to please humans. Therefore, animals are happiest when they are fulfilling humans' whims, however cruel. Therefore, in order to contribute to animals' happiness, humans should force animals to fulfill human whims. If it pleases a vivisector to pour oven cleaner into a rabbit's eye, the rabbit is happiest with oven cleaner in his eye. If it pleases a deep-sea fishing guide to use a live kitten for bait, the kitten is happiest impaled on a fishing hook.

Hearne concludes by revealing the philosophical underpinnings of her theory: "Only [an animal's] owner has the power... to grant him his rights..." Jefferson, whose name Hearne blas-

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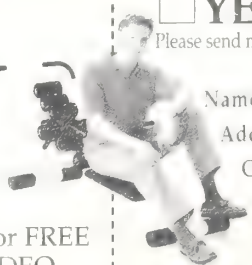
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phemously evokes in support of a theory that would sicken him, knew better. He recognized that rights are inalienable, their existence self-evident. A rabbit's right not to have oven cleaner poured in its eye is inherent. It exists whether the state recognizes it or not. If our government repeals the Thirteenth Amendment tomorrow, slavery may once again be legal, but it will still be wrong. Pouring oven cleaner in rabbits' eyes is wrong. It always has been; it always will be. One day, the law will conform to this truth.

Elizabeth L. DeCoux
Jackson, Miss.

In our town the Victorian era is past and the Humane Society is operated by women who have grown bitter from seeing so many friendly beasts dumped on them by people too lazy to spay or care for them, or too vain to enjoy the sort of pet you do not see at pretentious dog and cat shows. These women struggle to get wounded animals to the Wildlife Center of Virginia, where similarly modest and honest persons labor night and day, for far less than a dog trainer's wage, to undo the effects of injuries often caused by the vulgar sadism of hunters and their delightfully trained dogs.

Jonathan McVity
Charlottesville, Va.

Vicki Hearne's appeal to Aristotle is erroneous, for Aristotle would not agree with her that animals are able to apprehend the notion of choice. But far be it for me to attempt to convince an animal owner that her dog is not rational; human beings habitually anthropomorphize anything that can be housebroken, including their gods.

Aristotle, however, may have had a good reason, as an animal lover, for hoping that animals do not have the capacity for reason or choice and, therefore, cannot achieve virtue and happiness. Aristotle would undoubtedly remember Priam's speech from the *Iliad* in which he says that his own corpse would be torn apart "on my own doorstep by the hounds I trained as watchdogs, fed from my own table. They [would] lap my blood with ravenous hearts." It is best not to think of those hounds as *choosing* to do those things, for a being that could choose to lap up the blood of the one it had learned happiness from would be…well, worse than an animal.

Gene Fendt
Kearney, Neb.

Vicki Hearne is living in the time of René Descartes, who thought that animals were machines with no feelings. To select an animal trainer to write on animal rights is like asking a butcher to write on vegetarianism. To train an animal means, first of all, to subdue it. The methods used by trainers to do this subduing are, for the most part, kept secret from the public.

Most wild animals are trained by withholding their food, that is, if the subduer is "kind." Another more common method is beating in the face—as is done to the so-called trained orangutans in one Las Vegas nightclub. Elephant trainers use an implement with brightly colored fibers that disguise a sharp steel hook. When a trainer sticks this training tool into the aural cavity or other delicate parts of the elephant's body, the pain is so severe that the elephant will do *anything*—stand on its head, dance on its hind legs in a tutu, etc. These are not actions that any elephant would perform if permitted to retain its moral rights.

With our longtime domesticated animals, such as the dog and horse, training may not have to be this severe, but it is still plenty tough. It doesn't take a dog long to learn that not minding means being brought up suddenly and hard by a choke chain, having its paws stepped on if it walks ahead of its trainer, or being denied its dinner. A dressage horse that makes a misstep catches on quickly when it gets a sharp stab in the belly from its trainer's spurs.

Hearne speaks of the "extended" lives of animals in captivity. An orca whale that ordinarily lives forty or fifty years in the wild lives approximately eight years in our various Sea Worlds. Even if they lived only eight years in the wild, they would be free to travel through the hundreds of miles of ocean natural to them rather than be confined to the tiny pools in which they are made prisoners at Sea Worlds. How much better for all cap-

e animals to have even a few nat-
al years in the wild than a longer
etime of incarceration, boredom,
d "training."

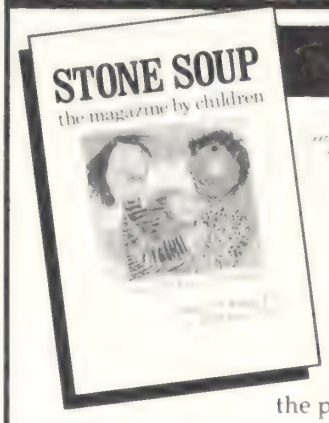
ury Sternberg
condido, Calif.

While recently strolling shirtless
rough a local park much frequent-
by neighborhood dogs and cats, I
oticed that a homeless flea had
ghted upon my shoulder. As an ex-
riment I placed a small drop of a
ry sweet soft drink close to the flea
d soon discovered that this appar-
ntly "brainless" creature could be
ade to change its location by my
oving the sugary reward to other
dy parts. Eventually I settled upon
dex-fingertip positioning of the so-
so that, in response to my slow
aving of said finger in the air, this
ever flea could be made to veritably
nce through a series of pleasing aeri-
acrobatics.

Curious passersby, arrested and
obably frightened by my humming
d strange finger-play, gathered and
gan to make inquiries about my be-
avior. Upon learning of its real nature
d intent, they naturally uttered en-
ouraging words to my tiny new com-
anion (whom I had christened
Franklin") and wondered if they
ight pet him (her?). As does Vicki
leame when interrupted while train-
g her dog Drummer, I had to take a
rong position that they had not in
ct earned the right to disrupt the
human-flea work" in which we were
ngaged and which was patently of
xistential import to both of us. No
lea worth its salt is susceptible to
ushy encomiums, and the sooner
arriers are set up against sentimental
anipulation of this sort, the better for
ll concerned.

After retiring for the day from my
ew calling as an animal trainer (of ad-
nittedly modest attainments), I pon-
lered the flea-human relationship and
vas immediately struck by its strong
imilarity to that governing relations
etween individuals and the state
sensu Hegel, of course). Either de-
iberately or inadvertently I could have
rushed Franklin, while, despite his
elative insignificance, Franklin might
ave made a great nuisance of himself,

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is into an as-
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and protes-
that had developed
us could continue to be rewarding if only we worked at it without illusion or overmuch frustration. So too may each of us arrive at a harmonious working relationship with agents of the state, be they elected officials or apparatchiks. For this insight I thank Franklin, and if only a more nuanced flea-human form of dialogue could be discovered, I am sure that he would express similar gratitude to me for putting him through his paces in a way that optimizes his sensory and performing skills while satisfying his obvious appetite for hard work.

Terrence O'Keeffe
Pearl River, N.Y.

Impetuous Intelligence

In his article on the CIA ["Unelected, Unlawful, Unchecked," October] Christopher Hitchens underscores what many of us have strongly believed for at least three decades. The downfall of this country will come not as the result of foreign aggression nor at the hands of so-called subversives, whether internal or external; it will come about, rather, as a result of the unmonitored, unregulated, and unchecked excesses of our own government and its agencies, particularly the CIA.

As a nation, we have in the past endured other governmental excesses (for example, McCarthyism). But these were at least openly visible and thus subject to the scrutiny and, ultimately, the control of the American public. Clearly, that is not the situation facing us now. Our freedom is seriously threatened when our own government chooses to engage in wrongdoing and then hides its deeds under a cloak of extreme secrecy, as Hitchens documents. In 1735 Andrew Hamilton, in defending John Peter Zenger in a trial crucial to establishing freedom of the press in this country, had this to say: "Power may justly be compared to a great river; while kept within its bounds, it is both beautiful and useful, but when it overflows its banks, it is then too impetuous to be stemmed; it bears down all before it, and brings destruction and desolation wherever it comes."

Is the CIA already "too impetuous to be stemmed"? I fervently hope not.

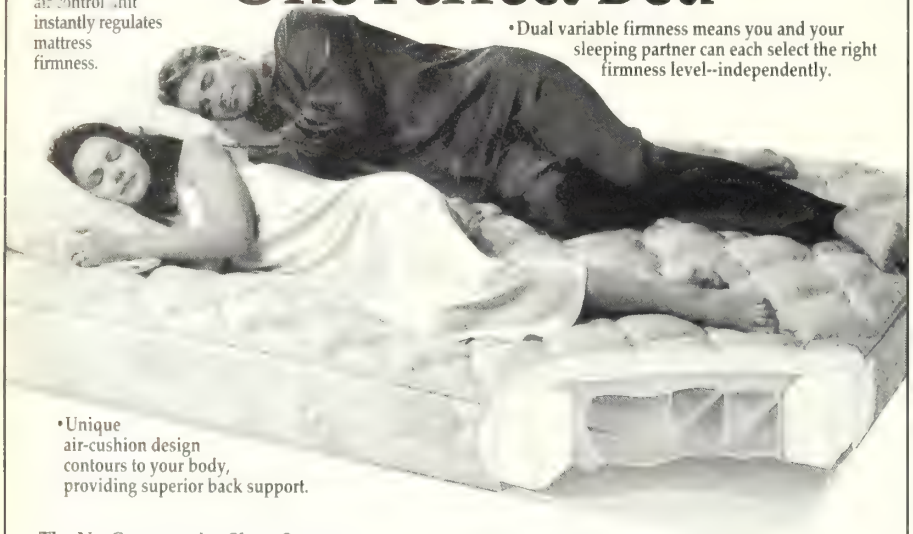
David G. Gardner
Seattle

Baseball Prose

Loved the "found" poetry that Hart Seeley and Tom Peyer ["The Bard of Baseball," Readings, October] discovered in the on-air ramblings of New York Yankees sportscaster Phil (Scooter) Rizzuto. However, the authors missed my favorite Rizzuto patter. Three years ago I was watching a Yankees game on WPIX in New York. Rizzuto was calling the plays with sportscaster Bill White. Between pitches the camera panned a glorious full moon. The banter was as follows:

WHITE: Will ya look at that full moon, Phil?
RIZZUTO: Wow. Hey! I see *Texas!*

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ill White was so stunned he could ot reply. The next month (exactly), ie topic was again the full moon:

RIZZUTO: Look at that moon, Bill.
WHITE: I know. You can see Texas.

rmaine LaFemina
icksville, N.Y.

Hurricane Bob

Bob Shacochis points out quite early and poetically the dangers that urricanes pose to coastal develop- ient and to people living in their ath ["Written in the Big Wind," eptember]. But he misses a couple f minor meteorological aspects of urricanes. The "eye" of the storm is ot "a chimney for evaporating wa- r to be sucked heavenward off the cean." The eye of the storm is the re- ion of a downdraft. It is this down- ard motion, into regions of higher ressure at the lower altitudes, that auses cloud droplets to evapo- ate...and thus the "clearing," or eye. The upward air currents, which can xceed 60 miles an hour, occur in the ye wall, the cloudbands that form he wall of the eye...those "marbled alls."

The consensus among tornado re- earchers is that the maximum winds nge from 250 to 300 miles per hour, nd not "the speed of sound," which s 761.6 m.p.h. Measurements this pring by portable Doppler radar con- irmed this speed range.

Those minor points aside, Sha- ochis brings out some interesting hallenges that hurricanes present to ur expanding coastal development. A ecent report estimates that 10,000 ives could be lost in a major hurri- ane, even in this day of satellites, adars, and McIDAS computers. And who pays for the rebuilding of those omes along such danger zones? Guess who? It's interesting to see that the ebuilt homes on Folley Beach, North Carolina, do not have even the sim- plest of protective devices, shutters on the windows, to protect from the whirlwinds of future minor hurricanes. Such lessons once learned the hard way are apparently now lost after the "three-stage surge of money."

Joe Witte
Meteorologist, *NBC News at Sunrise*
New York City

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NOTEBOOK

More light

By Lewis H. Lapham

[A free people has] an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean of the characters and conduct of their rulers.

—John Adams

On the Tuesday after the Senate Judiciary Committee completed its hearings on the question of Judge Clarence Thomas (his character and sexual deportment), I found myself at lunch with several television and newspaper correspondents who were busy worrying about what they called "the unseemliness" of the proceedings on Capitol Hill. The tone of their conversation was genteel. The gentleman seated nearest to the ferns referred to "the spectacle of degradation." A woman dressed in silk said that she was "disgusted" by the "sordid" lines of questioning. All agreed that the hearings were "a national disgrace," that "something must be done" to correct a system of government so patently vile that it discouraged the participation of the good and true Americans (presumably present in large numbers somewhere west of the Alleghenies) who refused to descend into the sewers of politics.

Their sentiments echoed those of President Bush, Justice Thomas, and the front page of the *New York Times*, and as I listened to their expressions of refined alarm, it occurred to me that we have become so estranged from both the spirit and practice of democracy in the United States that we no longer know what the thing looks like. Apparently we expect the business of government to be something orderly, decorous, and sitcom-ish, to happen in places in which benign statesmen wearing white gloves pass noble documents to one another on silver trays.

The expectation is as foolish as it is absurd. For my own part I thought the hearings cast a clear and welcome light on the character and conduct of some of the disreputable politicians who govern the state. For a few hours over the Columbus Day weekend, against both the odds and the will of Congress, the American people were awakened to the shape and sound of their elected government. Politics consists in a ceaseless and bitter argument about who has the power to do what to whom, at what price, for how long, and with what chance of redress, and here were people waging that argument in plain sight, telling one another the self-interested lies that they ordinarily manage to hide behind closed doors or disguise in the language of high-minded abstraction. The argument was often dishonest and sometimes comic, but it was an argument about the uses of power and the nature of justice, and its consequences undoubtedly will become apparent in an increasingly repressive definition of the nation's laws. If the hearings were sordid or disgusting, it was because the argument was lost to the champions of oligarchy, not because of the sexual aspects of the testimony or because of the vicious slanders brought by the Republican senators against the character of Professor Anita Hill. The American people understood precisely what they were looking at and why, and their appreciation of the rarity of the October hearings showed up in the Nielsen ratings. On the Friday evening Judge Thomas delivered his philippic against Anita Hill and the premises of democratic government, the two networks that broadcast the proceedings (ABC and NBC) received a 40 share of the audience. A championship baseball game appearing simultaneously on CBS received only a 19 share.

If the American people learned that liberty has ambitious enemies (among them Justice Clarence Thomas), they also learned that a democracy allies itself with social change and with the extensions—no matter how slight or how bitterly opposed—of human freedom and human possibility. Change is never easy and seldom fun; more often than not it takes place under circumstances that the apologists for the status quo invariably find "degrading."

The historical change at issue in Washington over the Columbus Day weekend was the one governing the shift in the alliance between men and women. For at least a century, but more insistently during the last twenty years, women have pressed their objections against the routine abuses of power (social, political, economic) with which the society holds in check their freedom of thought and action. Subtract academic feminist jargon from the argument, and it is the same argument advanced by the aggrieved colonial gentlemen who signed the Declaration of Independence.

Like the British Parliament in the late eighteenth century, the United States Senate in the late twentieth century regards the prospect of social change (any social change) as both an insult and a nasty surprise. When presented with Professor Anita Hill's report of the sexual advances offered to her by Judge Clarence Thomas, the Judiciary Committee dismissed the statement as an irrelevant annoyance.

Nobody wished to reconvene the mmittee's researches into a matter at already had been satisfactorily ranged. The committee understood at Judge Thomas's nomination had tle or nothing to do with his intel-ence or his integrity or his knowl-ge of the law, but they also knew at they didn't want to change their tes and that any continuation of e hearings could bring them noth-g but grief. They didn't have a oice. In the service of a Senate that cks the courage of any conviction t endorsed by a public opinion poll, ie Judiciary Committee went un-illingly to the television cameras, bliged to pay the price of the Presi-nt's cynicism as well as their own. They made a show of their venali-and cowardice that was marvelous behold. By turns angry, confused, nbarrassed, and malevolent, the embers of the committee passed the eekend violating their own rules of rocedure and protesting their inno-nce. It wasn't their fault that the earings were still in session; it wasn't their fault that things had gotten so far out of hand; it wasn't their fault that Professor Hill's unsworn statement had found its way into the newspapers. The chairman of the committee, Joseph Biden (D., Del.), felt so sorry for himself that at one point he said to a witness, "I, too, have suffered."

With respect to the testimony of Anita Hill, none of the members of the committee (Democrat or Republican) understood what it was that she was talking about, or why anything she said was important to anybody other than themselves. They ignored the historical and existential questions in the room (the ones about the evolution of the society's sexual mores), and they subjugated any questions of principle, conviction, or conscience to the rules of Washington realpolitik. Uneasy with the testimony for reasons of their own, the Democratic senators made no attempt to shape her observations into a coherent narrative. The Republicans carried out the White House brief to do whatever was necessary to discredit the woman's statement. They did so with a meanspirited singleness of purpose that was as effective as it was dishonorable. Senator Orrin Hatch (R., Utah) distinguished himself by virtue of his smirking hypocrisy; Senator Alan Simpson (R., Wyo.), by his ignorance; and Senator Arlen Specter (R., Pa.), by his talents as a sophist and a bully.

The political question before the committee was the one about Judge Thomas's fitness to serve as an associate justice of the Supreme Court, and the answer to the question was apparent almost as soon as the judge began to speak. Testifying on Friday and again on Saturday, the judge revealed himself to be a man who despised the hopes as well as the mechanics of democratic government. His manner was that of an outraged British duke during the reign of George III, and his response to even the smallest whisper of seditious libel about the moral beauty of his soul could have been expressed in the phrase "How dare they?"

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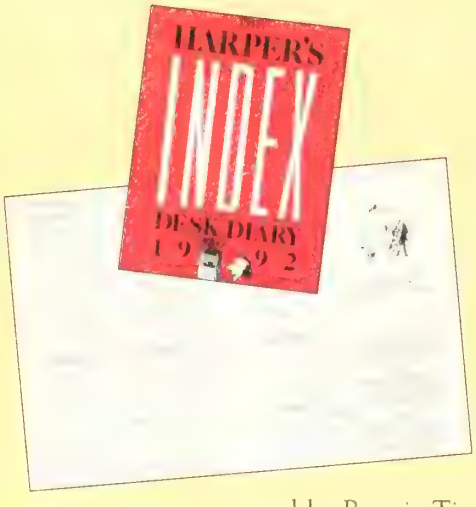
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Choosing to ignore the point that Professor Hill's statement referred to his abuse of public office (i.e., to sexual advances offered by the chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to a woman dependent upon him for her livelihood and career), the judge refused to accept any senator's question about the text of his private life. He was as arrogant as he was vain, and so contemptuous of what the commoners might have to say that he didn't condescend to listen to Professor Hill's testimony to the committee on Friday afternoon.

The judge's delusions of grandeur conformed to the specifications of his career as a loyal courtier pledged to the service of Republican money. For nearly twenty years he had kissed the rings of his patrons (Senator John Danforth, Ronald Reagan, Edwin Meese, George Bush, et al.), and he had become accomplished in the dance of grace and favor by which a man rises in the world not by reason of his merits but because of his connections.

The forced tone of his indignation followed from his long residence in the make-believe kingdoms of neoconservative rhetoric. Because he had never seen a lynching he could advertise himself as a victim of "high-tech lynching...destroyed...by a committee of the U.S. Senate rather than hung from a tree." Because he knew that if his accession to the Supreme Court failed he could return to lifelong tenure on the Federal Appeals Court and be comforted forever with the martyr's portion at the American Enterprise Institute, he could say that he had "died a thousand deaths" and would have "preferred an assassin's bullet to this kind of living hell." Pretending to know nothing of the art of political chicanery (i.e., "this sleaze, this dirt, this gossip," etc.) that had provided him with all his honors and all his offices, he could say to the Senate Judiciary Committee, "You are ruining the country."

On Friday morning he had the gall to present himself as a victim, a man who had been forced to endure the unspeakable agony of sitting comfortably in a chair for two weeks and being asked a series of facile questions to which he gave equally facile an-

ers. He went on to say that "no job vorth what I've been through." Like ich of the rest of his testimony, the tement was false. He wanted the so badly that on Friday evening he urned to the witness table armed th the paint pots of racial hatred. ior to the judge's evening testimo-, nobody had smeared the proceed-gs with reference to anybody's color. nita Hill was black and so was Judge nomas, and the argument was about e abuse of power—about the hu-liation that the master can inflict the servant.

On Friday afternoon the executive oducers directing Judge Thomas om the White House apparently told m that his confirmation was not yet rtain, and they advised him to get isy with his paints and brushes. The dge did as he was told, and by night-ll he was talking to the television meras about "bigoted, racial stereo-pes...racial attitudes about black men id their views of sex"...etc., etc.

His technique was that of a dema-gue, and by the time he had given s third performance at the witness ble it was abundantly clear that idge Thomas was unfit to sit on the nch of a traffic court in Marina del ey. He made the case against himself ot on the evidence of what he said or idn't say to Anita Hill but on the roofs of his contempt for the entire paratus of the American idea—for Congress, for the press, for freedom f expression, for the uses of demo-ratic government, for any rules oth-r than his own.

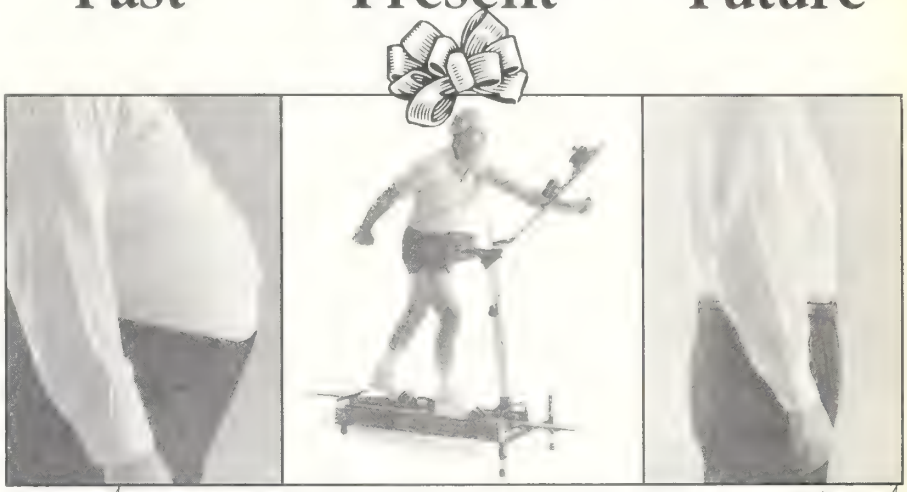
The Judiciary Committee did its est not to notice. The Republicans nterpreted Judge Thomas's remarks s a patriotic variation on a theme by .t. Col. Oliver North, and the Democrats were so intimidated that heir chairman, Senator Biden, felt ound to apologize. "Please," he said, I don't like this any better than you lo, Judge."

The senator's embarrassment was s unctuous as his weasel's smile. Ani-a Hill was talking about sex, and udge Thomas was talking about race, nd where was it safe for a politician o hide? How was he going to get ack to Delaware with all his votes ntact?

He resolved the dilemma by sub-stituting a legal question for the po-litical question. If all the loose and possibly dangerous talk could be con-fined within the frame of a single in-quiry (did Judge Thomas commit an act of sexual harassment against the person of Anita Hill ten years ago be-hind a closed door in a soundproof room?), and if the inquiry had the fur-ther advantage of being hopeless (for who except the judge and the profes-sor could possibly know what hap-pened ten years ago behind a closed door in a soundproof room?), then none of the Democrats on the com-mittee would have to think for them-selves, and all would be well.

The evasive maneuver allowed the Democrats on the committee to wait patiently for a miracle of divine revelation. Maybe somebody would come forward with proof that Anita Hill had spent five years in a mental insti-tution in West Hollywood. Or maybe a messenger would arrive from Mt. Olympus with documents showing that Clarence Thomas once toured the Italian Riviera with a porno-

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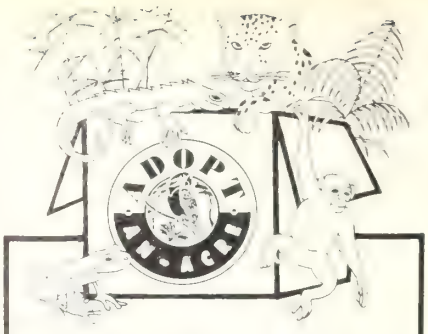
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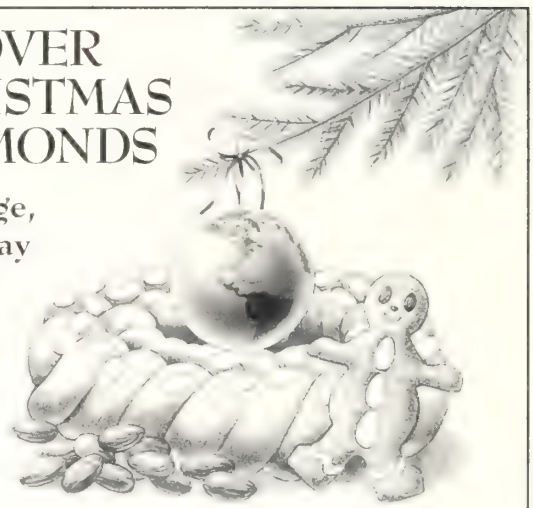
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graphic dance troupe. Failing news ... genuinely astonishing magnitude, t... Democrats remained content with o... servations on the order of Howe... Heflin's (D., Ala.) discovery that "o... of them [Anita Hill or Clarenc... Thomas] is not telling the truth."

Once it was clear that the Dem... crats didn't wish to engage the poli... ical question, the Republicans had ... trouble establishing the metaphor ... a criminal trial. Here was a good ma... accused of a crime ten years after th... fact by a woman who might be cra... (or lovelorn, or hostage to a femini... conspiracy, or the agent of a foreig... power, etc.), and because this is Ame... ica (land of the free and home of th... brave), a man is innocent until prove... guilty, and by God, we owe it to th... fine jurist (this prince of righteou... ness who has endured the sufferings ... Job) to grant him the benefit of th... doubt. The metaphor carried withou... objection, and Judge Thomas's cor... firmation was assured well before th... hearings ended and Chairman Bide... waved his last, talk-show host ... farewell.

The hearings provided the Amer... can people with John Adams's "mos... dreaded and envied kind of know... edge," but the news media didn't war... any part of it, and they immediatel... took up the cause of suppression an... denial. Senator John Danforth (R... Mo.), who sponsored Judge Thomas... candidacy for the Supreme Court an... who appeared throughout the week... end in the role of faithful shepherd... seldom managed to talk to reporter... without giving the impression tha... he was on the verge of tears. On Sun... day he stood in the rotunda of th... Russell Senate Office Building an... blamed the American democracy fo... Judge Thomas's ordeal. "This is a rot... ten system," he said, "rotten to th... core." A similar tone of weepin... moralism appeared almost simultane... ously in the upper chambers of th... press. As early as Saturday on the fron... page of the *New York Times*, R. W... Apple bemoaned the "lurid, gut... wrenching" scenes on Capitol Hill... and on Sunday, still appalled by "hor... rifying events" and "excruciating de... tail," he was suggesting that mayb... the Congress should conduct its con... firmations in secret, or at least com...

) some sort of prior arrangement with
ne White House about the kind of
ominees who could be relied upon to
efrain from embarrassing the chil-
ren and the servants.

By noon Tuesday the figurative
ringing of hands had become the
isdom in office. When I joined the
ompany of the elect at lunch among
he ferns on West Forty-sixth Street,
noticed that I was the only journal-
t present who hadn't already appeared
n a talk show to ask (*molto serioso*
nd while gloomily shaking the head)
hat was to become of a country in
hich louts, madwomen, and irre-
ponsible gossipmongers could foul the
emple of government with the filth of
elf-interested lies. Somebody quoted
ustice Thomas (or maybe it was
George Bush, or David Broder, or John
Danforth, or R. W. Apple) to the ef-
ect that the scenes on Capitol Hill
were "intolerable...not the America
ve know."

But it was, of course, precisely the
America we know. The America rep-
esented on the Senate Judiciary Com-
nittee is the America of the savings
nd loan swindle and the fraudulent
defense contract, the America defaced
by its crowded prisons and its wretched
schools, the America that lies to itself
about the wonderful prosperity cer-
tain to derive from an economic pol-
icy that places an intolerable burden
on the weak, the old, the poor, the ig-
norant, the young, and the sick. If we
wish to give ourselves a decent chance
to make an America that isn't as
frightened or corrupt as the Senate
Judiciary Committee, we will have to
do the work in the honest light of day.

As Jefferson and Lincoln well knew
(possibly because they were subjected
to slanders far more vicious than those
addressed to Clarence Thomas), the
advancement of civilization is never a
pretty sight. But we can't know what
we're about, or whether we're telling
ourselves too many lies, unless we can
see and hear one another talk.

Great power constitutes its own ar-
gument, and it never has much trou-
ble drumming up friends, applause,
sympathetic exigesis, and a band. But
a democracy stands in need of as many
questions as its citizens can ask of their
own stupidity and fear. As many ques-
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HARPER'S INDEX

Acres of land on the West Bank seized by the Israeli government since the peace process began last March : 46,000
Chances that an Israeli "would consider trading territories for peace" : 2 in 3
Percentage of annual U.S. economic aid to Israel that is used to pay debts to the United States : 99
Number of the 6 Democratic presidential candidates who say they support unconditional loan guarantees for Israel : 5
Rank of Senator Tom Harkin, among congressional recipients of pro-Israel PAC funds last year : 3
Amount of money electronically transferred every minute among U.S. banks : $819,300,000
Change, since last year, in investment by U.S. banks in commercial and industrial ventures : −$39,700,000,000
Change in investment by U.S. banks in government securities : +$58,400,000,000
Percentage change, since last year, in sales of junk bonds in the United States : +100
Projected average annual growth rate for the U.S. economy during the 1990s, according to Merrill Lynch : +2.2
Average annual growth rate of the U.S. economy during the 1930s : +2.1
Projected 1991 growth rate for the Soviet economy : −14
Portion of eastern Germany's gross annual product accounted for by government transfers from western Germany : 7/10
Chances that an eastern German acknowledges "some sympathy for radical rightist tendencies" : 1 in 5
Chances that a western German does : 1 in 3
Estimated number of regions worldwide that have declared themselves independent or autonomous since 1989 : 50
Portion of the world's countries to which the United States has sold arms : 5/6
Percentage change, since March, in the Pentagon's estimate of U.S. deaths in the Gulf War due to friendly fire : +218
Percentage increase, since last year, in the price of bread in Baghdad : 3,000
Price of a single-serving pizza at Beijing's Pizza Hut, expressed as a portion of the average worker's weekly salary : 1/5
Number of pizzas Moscow's Pizza Hut delivered to the Russian parliament building during the Soviet coup : 260
Estimated number of mosques that have been built or reopened in the Soviet Union since 1989 : 4,800
Number of new saints canonized by the Vatican since 1978 : 262
Ratio of the Barbie dolls sold in the United States since 1959 to the number of Americans born since then : 5:1
Percentage of American men who say they would rather have sex with Betty Rubble than Wilma Flintstone : 58
Chances that a television set tuned to *Good Morning America* or *The Today Show* is not being watched : 1 in 5
Percentage of American adults under the age of 30 who say they "almost never" switch channels during commercials : 22
Percentage of Americans over the age of 60 who say this : 45
Number of Floridians who are officially registered with the state government as "chemically sensitive" : 18
Price of one minute of fresh air from a sidewalk oxygen booth in Mexico City : $1.15
Amount the EPA will spend this year to research the role of livestock flatulence in global warming : $130,000
Pairs of moose-dung earrings sold each year at Grizzly's Gifts in Anchorage, Alaska : 6,000
Value Lloyd's of London has placed on a Viking turd owned by England's Archaeological Resource Centre : $34,000
Amount the city of Montreal will spend this year on a rest room for dogs in William Bowie Park : $34,000
Price of a deluxe model Jog-A-Dog, a treadmill for pets : $1,695
Maximum percentage increase in a hedgehog's weight before winter hibernation : 100
Number of seconds it takes Frank Perdue to sell his weight in chickens : 3.5
Estimated number of cookies that will be left out for Santa Claus this Christmas Eve : 84,000,000
Ratio of the density of the average fruitcake to the density of mahogany : 1:1

Figures cited are the latest available as of October 1991. Sources are listed on page 78.
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AS LONG AS THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO
WON'T MAKE A GOOD CHOICE WHEN IT'
POSSIBLE TO MAKE A GREAT ONE ...
There will always be a
CHIVAS REGAL
CHIVAS REGAL
BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY
12

READINGS

[Memoir]

MY DAILY DIVES IN THE DUMPSTER

From an article on urban scavenging by Lars Eighner, in the Fall issue of The Threepenny Review. *Eighner became homeless in 1988 after leaving a job that he had held for ten years as an attendant at the state hospital in Austin, Texas. Since last September he has been living in a small apartment in Austin and continues to scavenge. He is currently completing a memoir about homelessness.*

I began Dumpster diving about a year before I became homeless.

I prefer the term "scavenging" and use the word "scrounging" when I mean to be obscure. I have heard people, evidently meaning to be polite, use the word "foraging," but I prefer to reserve that word for gathering nuts and berries and such, which I do also, according to the season and opportunity.

I like the frankness of the word "scavenging." I live from the refuse of others. I am a scavenger. I think it a sound and honorable niche, although if I could I would naturally prefer to live the comfortable consumer life, perhaps—and only perhaps—as a slightly less wasteful consumer owing to what I have learned as a scavenger.

Except for jeans, all my clothes come from Dumpsters. Boom boxes, candles, bedding, toilet paper, medicine, books, a typewriter, a virgin male love doll, change sometimes amounting to many dollars: All came from Dumpsters. And, yes, I eat from Dumpsters too.

There are a predictable series of stages that a person goes through in learning to scavenge. At first the new scavenger is filled with disgust and self-loathing. He is ashamed of being seen and may lurk around trying to duck behind things, or he may try to dive at night. (In fact, this is unnecessary, since most people instinctively look away from scavengers.)

Every grain of rice seems to be a maggot. Everything seems to stink. The scavenger can wipe the egg yolk off the found can, but he cannot erase the stigma of eating garbage from his mind.

This stage passes with experience. The scavenger finds a pair of running shoes that fit and look and smell brand-new. He finds a pocket calculator in perfect working order. He finds pristine ice cream, still frozen, more than he can eat or keep. He begins to understand: People do throw away perfectly good stuff, a lot of perfectly good stuff.

At this stage he may become lost and never recover. All the Dumpster divers I have known come to the point of trying to acquire everything they touch. Why not take it, they reason, it is all free. This is, of course, hopeless, and most divers come to realize that they must restrict themselves to items of relatively immediate utility.

The finding of objects is becoming something of an urban art. Even respectable, employed people will sometimes find something tempting

ut of a Dumpster or standing beside a number of people, not all of them of the bohemian type, are willing to brag that they found this or that piece in the trash.

But eating from Dumpsters is the thing that separates the dilettanti from the professionals. Eating safely involves three principles: using the senses and common sense to evaluate the condition of the found materials; knowing the Dumpsters of a given area and checking them regularly; and seeking always to answer the question, Why was this discarded?

Perhaps everyone who has a kitchen and a regular supply of groceries has, at one time or another, eaten half a sandwich before discovering mold on the bread, or has gotten a mouthful of milk before realizing the milk had turned. Nothing of the sort is likely to happen to a Dumpster diver because he is constantly reminded that most food is discarded for a reason.

Yet perfectly good food can be found in Dumpsters. Canned goods, for example, turn up fairly often in the Dumpsters I frequent. All except the most phobic people would be willing to eat from a can even if it came from a Dumpster. I have few qualms about dry foods such as crackers, cookies, cereal, chips, and pasta if they are free of visible contaminates and still dry and crisp. Raw fruits and vegetables with intact skins seem perfectly safe to me, excluding, of course, the obviously rotten. Many are discarded for minor imperfections that can be pared away. Chocolate is often discarded only because it has become discolored as the cocoa butter de-emulsified.

I began scavenging by pulling pizzas out of the Dumpster behind a pizza delivery shop. In general, prepared food requires caution, but in this case I knew what time the shop closed and went to the Dumpster as soon as the last of the help left.

Because the workers at these places are usually inexperienced, pizzas are often made with the wrong topping, baked incorrectly, or refused on delivery for being cold. The products to be discarded are boxed up because inventory is kept by counting boxes: A boxed pizza can be written off; an unboxed pizza does not exist. So I had a steady supply of fresh, sometimes warm pizza.

The area I frequent is inhabited by many affluent college students. I am not here by chance; the Dumpsters are very rich. Students throw out many good things, including food, particularly at the end of the semester and before and after breaks. I find it advantageous to keep an eye on the academic calendar.

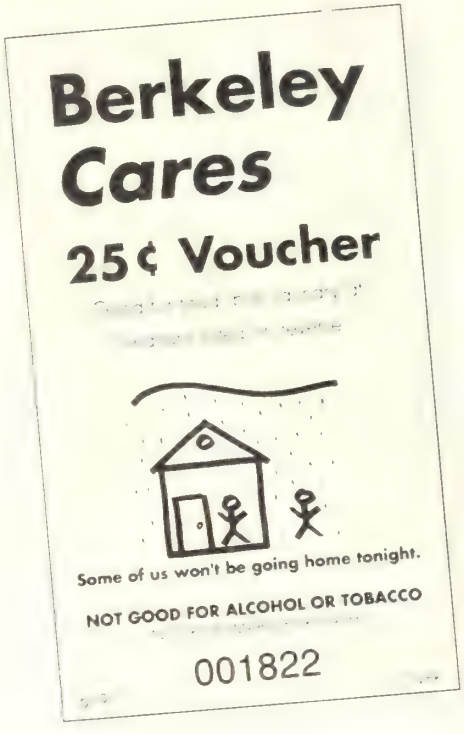
A typical discard is a half jar of peanut butter—though non-organic peanut butter does not require refrigeration and is unlikely to spoil in any reasonable time. Occasionally I find a cheese with a spot of mold, which, of course, I just pare off, and because it is obvious why the cheese was discarded, I treat it with less suspicion than an apparently perfect cheese found in similar circumstances. One of my favorite finds is yogurt—often discarded, still sealed, when the expiration date has passed—because it will keep for several days, even in warm weather.

I avoid ethnic foods I am unfamiliar with. If I do not know what it is supposed to look or smell like when it is good, I cannot be certain I will be able to tell if it is bad.

No matter how careful I am I still get dysentery at least once a month, oftener in warm weather. I do not want to paint too romantic a picture. Dumpster diving has serious drawbacks as a way of life.

[Voucher]

BEYOND SPARE CHANGE



The coupon above, which costs twenty-five cents, is sold by stores in Berkeley, California, to city residents who wish to contribute to homeless people without giving cash. The voucher can be redeemed at participating businesses for twenty-five cents' worth of food, laundry service, or bus



lario, by Philip-Lorca diCorcia. From "Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort," an exhibition at the Museum of Mod-n Art in New York City until December 31. Next year the show will travel to Baltimore and San Francisco. DiCorcia es in New York City.

Though I have a proprietary feeling about my Dumpsters, I don't mind my direct competitors, other scavengers, as much as I hate the soda-can scroungers.

I have tried scrounging aluminum cans with an able-bodied companion, and afoot we could make no more than a few dollars a day. I can extract the necessities of life from the Dumpsters directly with far less effort than would be required to accumulate the equivalent value in aluminum. Can scroungers, then, are people who *must* have small amounts of cash—mostly drug addicts and winos.

I do not begrudge them the cans, but can scroungers tend to tear up the Dumpsters, littering the area and mixing the contents. There are precious few courtesies among scavengers, but it is a common practice to set aside surplus items: pairs of shoes, clothing, canned goods, and such. A true scavenger hates to see good stuff go to waste, and what he cannot use he leaves in good condition in plain sight. Can scroungers lay waste to everything in their path and will stir one of a pair of good shoes to the bottom of a Dumpster to be lost or ruined in the muck. They become so specialized that they can see only cans and earn my contempt by passing up change, canned goods, and readily hockable items.

Can scroungers will even go through individual garbage cans, something I have never seen a scavenger do. Going through individual garbage cans without spreading litter is almost impossible, and litter is likely to reduce the public's tolerance of scavenging. But my strongest reservation about going through individual garbage cans is that this seems to me a very personal kind of invasion, one to which I would object if I were a homeowner.

Though Dumpsters seem somehow less personal than garbage cans, they still contain bank statements, bills, correspondence, pill bottles, and other sensitive information. I avoid trying to draw conclusions about the people who dump in the Dumpsters I frequent. I think it would be unethical to do so, although I know many people will find the idea of scavenger ethics too funny for words.

Occasionally a find tells a story. I once found a small paper bag containing some unused condoms, several partial tubes of flavored sexual lubricant, a partially used compact of birth control pills, and the torn pieces of a picture of a young man. Clearly, the woman was through with him and planning to give up sex altogether.

Dumpster things are often sad—abandoned

[illegible]pears, shredded wedding albums, de[illegible]les kits. I find diaries and journals. [illegible]e students also discard their papers; I am horrified to discover the kind of paper that now merits an A in an undergraduate course.

Dumpster diving is outdoor work, often surprisingly pleasant. It is not entirely predictable; things of interest turn up every day, and some days there are finds of great value. I am always very pleased when I can turn up exactly the thing I most wanted to find. Yet in spite of the element of chance, scavenging, more than most other pursuits, tends to yield returns in some proportion to the effort and intelligence brought to bear.

I think of scavenging as a modern form of self-reliance. After ten years of government service, where everything is geared to the lowest common denominator, I find work that rewards initiative and effort refreshing. Certainly I would be happy to have a sinecure again, but I am not heartbroken to be without one.

I find from the experience of scavenging two rather deep lessons. The first is to take what I can use and let the rest go. I have come to think that there is no value in the abstract. A thing I cannot use or make useful, perhaps by trading, has no value, however fine or rare it may be. (I mean useful in the broad sense—some art, for example, I would think valuable.)

The second lesson is the transience of material being. I do not suppose that ideas are immortal, but certainly they are longer-lived than material objects.

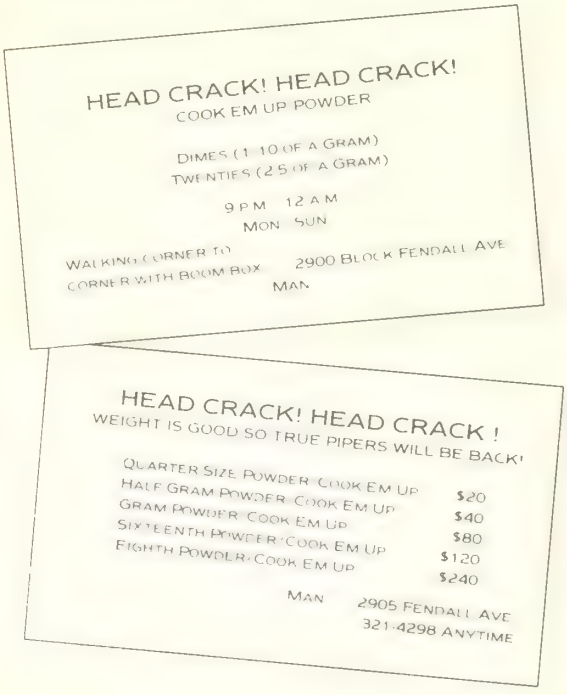
The things I find in Dumpsters, the love letters and rag dolls of so many lives, remind me of this lesson. Many times in my travels I have lost everything but the clothes on my back. Now I hardly pick up a thing without envisioning the time I will cast it away. This, I think, is a healthy state of mind. Almost everything I have now has already been cast out at least once, proving that what I own is valueless to someone.

I find that my desire to grab for the gaudy bauble has been largely sated. I think this is an attitude I share with the very wealthy—we both know there is plenty more where whatever we have came from. Between us are the rat-race millions who have confounded their selves with the objects they grasp and who nightly scavenge the cable channels looking for they know not what.

I am sorry for them.

[Business Cards]

DOPE



More than a thousand of these cards were seized in September by detectives in the narcotics division of the Richmond, Virginia, police department when they arrested Collin Hudson III, an alleged crack dealer, at his home. According to the police, Hudson, identified on the cards as "Man," distributed the cards to prospective customers.

[Party Rules]

VEGETABLE HOUSE

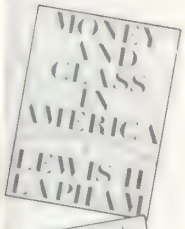
From the "Experimental Cook College Alcohol Policy and Party Guidelines for 1991/1992," a nine-page handout distributed in September to students at Cook College of Rutgers University, a residential college in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Students wishing to hold parties at the college are required to attend a training session, adhere to these guidelines, and sign the "social contract" below. Violations of the party guidelines may be punished by fines of up to $200 per resident and by expulsion from student housing.

1. All parties, whether alcohol is served or not, must be registered and approved at the Office of Residence and Commuter Life prior to the event. Registration forms may be obtained from your residence counselor. Parties may only be held on Fridays and Saturdays.

2. More than sixteen persons in an apartment will be considered a party.

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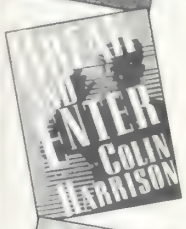
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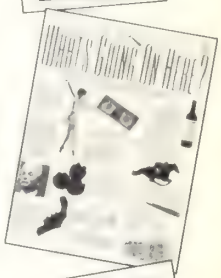
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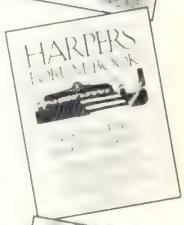
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[…n Transcript]

IN A COMA THROUGH THE COUP

From the transcript of a hearing held in a Moscow prison in August to investigate the conduct of Valentin S. Pavlov during the Soviet coup. Pavlov, who was the Soviet prime minister at the time of the coup, was one of the members of the Committee for the State of Emergency, which seized power from Mikhail Gorbachev on August 19. The transcript appeared in the October 7 issue of Der Spiegel, *the German weekly. Translated from the German by Timothy Sultan and Chris Alexander.*

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE: Do you confess that you are guilty of the charge of treason?

PAVLOV: No.

MAGISTRATE: On what grounds?

PAVLOV: During the meeting at which the committee was formed [on August 18], I had a very bad headache, as well as high blood pressure, so I took some pills. And while we were having these rather heated debates, we were handed mugs of coffee with some alcohol added. Before long I was no longer fully conscious. My bodyguards later told me that they had had to pick me up from a sofa to move me. To put it mildly, I could no longer move on my own. They had to carry me to the car.

So I was quite simply physically incapable of taking part in the discussions. If any conspiracy existed, I was never aware of it.

MAGISTRATE: Would you have been among the defenders of the Russian parliament?

PAVLOV: Probably. But my doctor told me—well, if you are familiar with such problems, then you know what it means that my blood pressure was 200 over 100.

MAGISTRATE: Did you try to call President Gorbachev to warn him?

PAVLOV: I was simply incapable of doing so. From the middle of that first meeting, I was lying flat on my back. From a purely physical standpoint, I could not have made a phone call.

MAGISTRATE: Did you drink any alcohol on that day, besides what was in the coffee?

PAVLOV: No, no.

MAGISTRATE: Despite the fact that your bodyguards claimed otherwise?

PAVLOV: Well, the coffee had a pretty decent amount of alcohol in it. It was whiskey, I know, because there was a bottle of whiskey on the table. Perhaps, occasionally, I took a sip from the bottle […]

3. Alcoholic beverages will be allowed in the following quantities only: up to six cases of twelve-ounce canned beer or up to one hundred ounces of hard liquor in total, or up to sixteen ounces of wine per individual. Beer quantity is based on an estimate that there will be thirty-seven people (not necessarily the same people) at the party at all times. If there will be fewer than thirty-seven people, the quantity of beer served should be prorated downward according to the expected number of people in attendance.

4. NO ALCOHOL PUNCHES.

5. Kegs or beerballs are not permitted.

6. Beverages must be consumed in reusable containers no more than sixteen ounces in size (paper, plastic, and/or disposable Styrofoam cups cannot be used).

7. Alternative non-alcoholic beverages (excluding tap water) and food (at least equal to one half the dollar amount spent on alcohol) must be available in sufficient quantities.

8. Alcohol is not to be served after 2:30 A.M., and the party must be dispersed by 3:00 A.M.

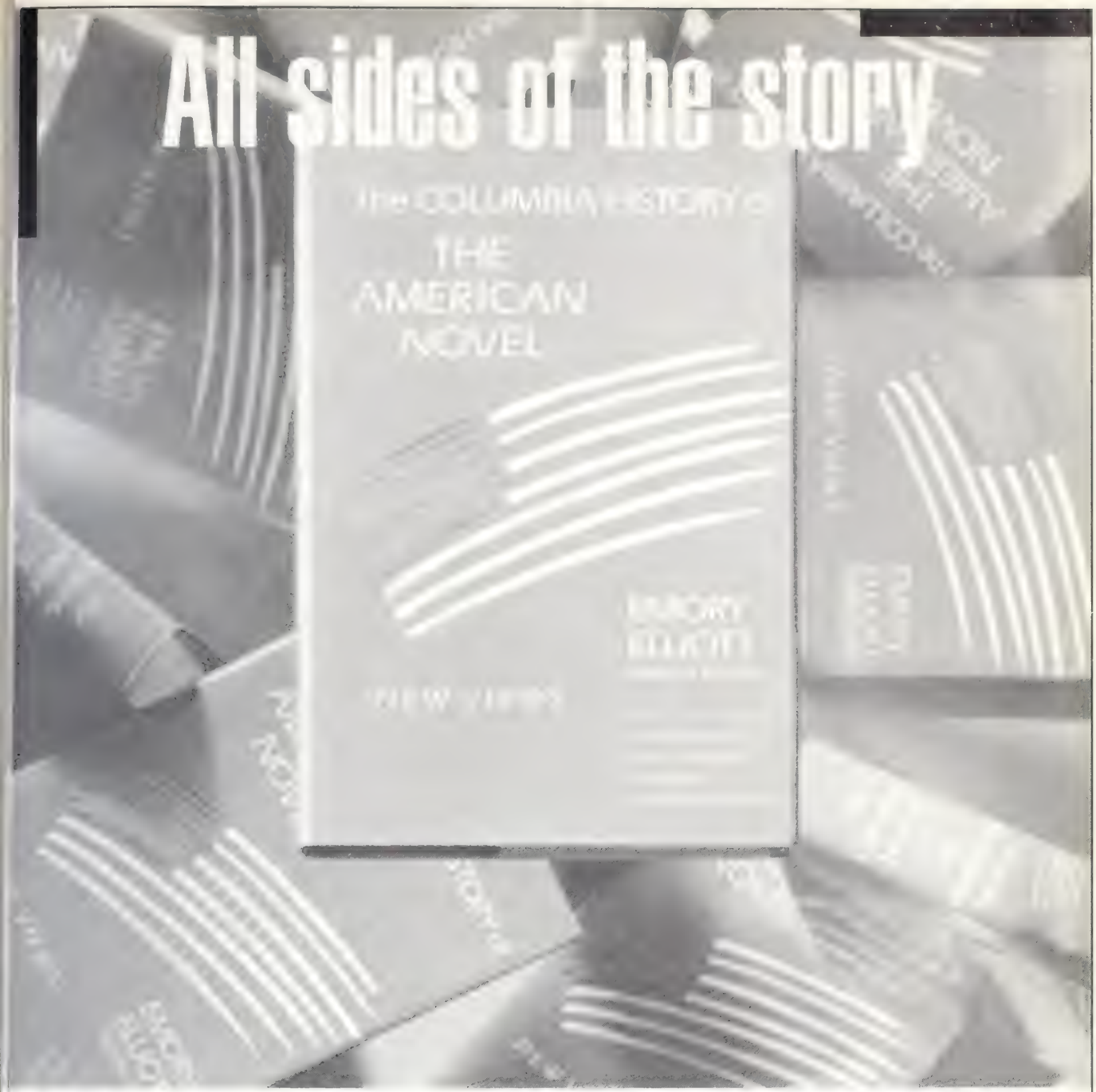
The Impromptu Party

The Residence Life staff understands that parties cannot always be planned well in advance. It is inevitable that friends will drop in unexpectedly or a victory in the Intramural Championships will spur a spontaneous party situation. However, this is not an excuse for an unregistered party. If the party arises between 8:00 P.M. on Friday and 8:00 A.M. on Sunday, you must contact the resident counselor on duty that weekend. If he/she is not there, leave a message and wait for a call back. NOTE: LEAVING A PHONE MESSAGE DOES NOT QUALIFY AS REGISTERING A PARTY. If you are unable to contact the resident counselor, you may not have a party.

SOCIAL CONTRACT

We, the undersigned, have attended the required Alcohol Policy, Party Guidelines, and Registration Procedures Training Session for social activity sponsors. We understand that we are entering into a partnership with the Office of Residence and Commuter Life to sponsor a safe and responsible social activity on the Cook College campus. Through our partnership we will strive to eliminate socially intolerable forms of behavior, specifically harassment, sexual abuse, driving under the influence, racism, sexism, homophobia, vandalism, vomiting, littering, and disorderly conduct. We pledge to be responsible for sponsoring a safe social activity where inappropriate behaviors (verbal, written, and/or physical confrontation) will not compromise the integrity of the university community.

(Signed) _____



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DIALING FOR THE DEATH PENALTY

From a memo by W. Lee Rawls, the assistant U.S. attorney general for legislative affairs, sent on June 17 to Richard Thornburgh, then the attorney general, requesting that Thornburgh make phone calls to Republican senators asking them to support an administration-sponsored crime bill. At the time the memo was written, the Senate was debating two bills on crime: one sponsored by Democratic senator Joseph Biden, the other sponsored by Republican senator Strom Thurmond and supported by the White House. Among the differences between the bills was the "racial justice" amendment, included in Biden's bill, which would have allowed an inmate to appeal a death sentence when the inmate could demonstrate that there was a disparity between sentences given to blacks and whites in the state where he or she had been tried. The compromise bill that was finally passed in July did not include Biden's racial justice amendment. According to Thurmond, it contained "the heart of the President's crime bill," including a provision to add about fifty new crimes to the list of those punishable by death. A similar bill passed in the House in October.

SUBJECT: Crime Bill Phone Calls

Starting today, the following phone calls [to the Republican senators listed below] would be valuable for the passage of the President's crime bill.



From Punch.

The sales pitch for all the calls is the same; individual nuances are noted after each name.

The basic pitch is that the President's crime bill is the centerpiece of his domestic agenda and we need their support. If they raise objections to the bill itself, emphasize that their vote is needed in order to make the President's bill the underlying legislative vehicle that will be subject to amendment. At this stage, a vote for the bill is not a vote for its final adoption, because it is likely to be subject to further amendment.

For those listed below who are opposed to a federal death penalty [those with the word "death" following their name], remind them that the Biden bill has mostly incorporated our death penalty provisions. If the so-called racial justice amendment is mentioned, inform them in a voice quivering with righteousness that no president will ever sign a bill that actually injects race into capital cases.

For those senators concerned with the exclusionary rule, the basic pitch will have to suffice. [The White House bill included a clause permitting judges, in certain circumstances, to disregard the exclusionary rule's prohibition on the use of illegally obtained evidence at trial. This clause was retained in the final version of the bill.]

Calls:

Chafee: death
Cohen: death
Danforth: death
Durenberger: death
Hatfield: death
Jeffords: death
Rudman: exclusionary
Packwood: death
Brown: general stroking

[Catalogue Copy]

A REAL BLAST

From "The Fun Stuff," a catalogue distributed by Blammo Ammo Company, a Seneca, South Carolina, ammunition retailer. The company, which pledges "to always bring you the most exotic ammo available on the market today," can legally ship its products anywhere in the country except California and New York City, where some of its ammunition is illegal.

DYN-O-MITE!

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Caution: If used at night, we recommend proper sunglass protection.

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[Correspondence]

THE BOB HOPE SPECIAL YOU CAN'T TURN OFF

From the correspondence of Sally Fox, a New Orleans woman who has been petitioning government officials and members of the media since the early 1980s to investigate Bob Hope and his "interference with [the] normal thinking" of Americans. The first letter below was addressed to the investigative reporting staffs of CBS News, ABC News, NBC News, CNN, 60 Minutes, *UPI, and* The National Enquirer. *The last two letters are an exchange between Fox and a woman from Bergen, New York, whose name has been withheld.*

June 17, 1988

Gentlemen:

I am involved in a phenomenal situation which I believe merits investigation.

The whole thing started about seven years ago when I began to "see" Bob Hope (the comedian) when I would close my eyes and concentrate. Through study, I learned that the reason I could "see" Bob Hope was because he is violently insane and uses abnormal thinking processes which introject and project others' egos.

When this problem began, besides worrying about my mental health, I also felt that my civil rights were being violated by another person's insanity, so I began to write letters to the FBI. At first the FBI thought I was crazy, but a year or so later, the FBI told me that they had been getting 800 to 900 complaints a day from people all around the country saying the same thing I was: Bob Hope is crazy and interferes with their normal thinking. The FBI told me they were investigating.

I told the FBI agent, and I am telling the press, that I believe, as a victim of this situation, that nothing will ever come of the investigation because Bob Hope is Ronald Reagan's best friend, and should it ever be proven that Bob Hope is insane, the President's reputation would be at stake.

Because the FBI seems to be participating in a cover-up, I am begging the press to get involved. Thousands of people are suffering, and we need help.

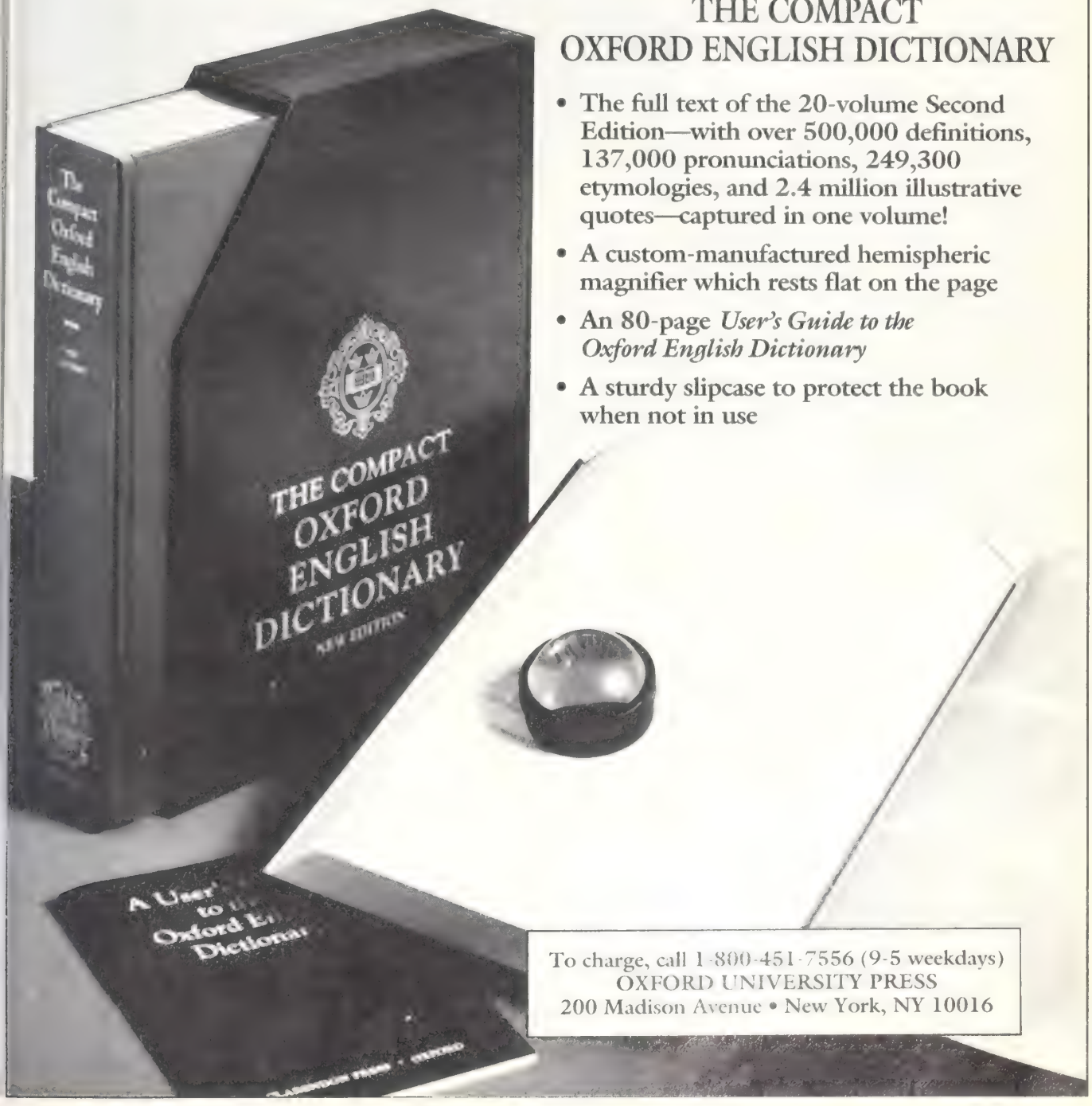
Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sally Fox

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cords]

IS THE SEASON TO BE CLUMSY

From a list, compiled last July by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, of injuries related to Christmas decorations sustained last year by Americans. The commission surveys hospital emergency-room records to determine whether certain ornaments or other decorations should be recalled or banned from sale.

Patient fell off of table onto Christmas ornament; minimal contusion, ankle.

Patient was putting up Christmas lights and fell off roof; fractured humerus.

Patient fell off wooden stepladder while putting up Christmas lights; fractured calcaneus.

Cast-iron blunt object (Christmas decoration) fell off a ledge, causing laceration to forehead.

Patient was holding glass ornament in hand, and it broke.

Patient's mother states that patient accidentally swallowed Christmas ornament.

Patient cut mouth on a glass snowman that was on the floor, causing a laceration to the tongue.

Patient was beaten by her mother because she knocked down a Christmas ornament; sprained right thumb.

Patient states he was walking down cellar steps to get Christmas decorations and missed a step, fell down flight of steps. Admits to six beers.

Patient cut finger on ceramic Santa at home.

Patient cut scalp on nail while putting box of Christmas ornaments away in the attic.

Patient reported strain to lower trunk picking up a box of Christmas ornaments.

Patient swallowed a Christmas tree ornament. Patient then vomited.

Patient lacerated hand on knife making Christmas decorations.

Patient reported right thumb pain, noticed swelling of thumb—had been working on Christmas wreaths at home

Patient put Christmas tree ornament in left ear.

Patient swallowed a jingle bell at school.

April 6, 1990

Dear President Bush:

On November 13, 1989, I sent you correspondence concerning Bob Hope, the comedian, and his insanity, which affects thousands of American people.

Evidently, you do not care to have this problem exposed, probably because Bob Hope was a major contributor to your campaign. I believe you are participating in a cover-up of this situation. You promised a kinder and gentler government, but instead you are hiding the facts.

I am furious. This is supposed to be America, the greatest nation on earth, capable of the best. Instead, people like you and Ronald Reagan break the laws of the land and ignore the complaints of thousands of people to protect Bob Hope so that he can remain a hero and contributor. His insanity is detrimental to the general psychological mood of the nation.

For the past ten years I have tried, unsuccessfully, to expose this problem. I have written to you, Ronald Reagan, the National Security Council, the FBI, and the National Institutes of Health, all to no avail. The only cooperation I received was from the FBI, who informed me that this issue has been classified Top Secret. It is an abomination of justice that the government of the United States of America has used the Top Secret classification to protect Bob Hope, and that you have allowed them to do so.

Allowing Bob Hope to abuse people's thinking is not in the best interest of the American people. You cannot continue to ignore and cover up the complaints of thousands. You will be exposed eventually. Therefore, I suggest that you open up an investigation and allow American citizens to think freely and without the interference of a very old, not so funny, violently insane psychopath, Bob Hope.

Yours truly,
Sally Fox

April 9, 1990

Members of Congress:

Enclosed please find correspondence regarding Bob Hope and his insane interference with normal thinking, which is detrimental to the general welfare of the American people.

Thousands of American people have complained to the FBI that Bob Hope is insane and interfering with their normal thinking. The only way to stop this heinous and vile mental abuse by Bob Hope is to open an investigation and let the people speak. Thousands of people are "sensitive" to Bob Hope's phenomenal insanity and are suffering, which violates their constitutional rights.

Yours truly,
Sally Fox

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May 2, 1990

Fox:

will acknowledge receipt and thank you
nce concerning Bob
Hope.

know that I have al-
ready contacted appropriate officials on your
behalf.

ly, I will be in touch with you again as
I hear from them. In the meantime,
know of my continuing interest in this
matter.

My kindest regards.

Sincerely,
Lindy (Mrs. Hale) Boggs
[House of Representatives, Second District,
Louisiana]

June 4, 1990

I am enclosing a response received from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in reply to my inquiry.

Naturally, I do regret that the information provided is not more encouraging.

In the meantime, do know that it was a pleasure to be of assistance to you and I was glad to have contacted the bureau on your behalf.

Sincerely,
Lindy (Mrs. Hale) Boggs

May 25, 1990

Dear Congresswoman Boggs:

This is in reply to your May 2 correspondence on behalf of Ms. Sally Fox. Ms. Fox alleges that the government is covering up its investigation of entertainer Bob Hope and "his insane interference with normal thinking" of thousands of Americans.

Ms. Fox has corresponded with the FBI in the past about this and other matters. These matters, however, fail to reveal a violation of federal law within this bureau's investigative jurisdiction. The FBI is, therefore, not taking any action with regard to Ms. Fox's complaint.

Sincerely yours,
John E. Collingwood
[Federal Bureau of Investigation]
Inspector-in-Charge
Congressional Affairs Office

August 1991

Dear Ms. Fox,

I was recently visiting a local college and I was describing to a friend the rather odd things (all involving Bob Hope) which seem to be happening to me. Amazingly, someone nearby overheard our conversation and recommended that I contact you.

I understand that you too have experienced these thought disturbances, and I would like to know what you experience (hearing voices, seeing "visions" or other strange images, etc.).

Also, I would like more information about Bob Hope's form of insanity. I am very relieved to learn that I am not the only person facing this problem!

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,
X

August 19, 1991

Dear X,

I read with amazement your letter concerning Bob Hope, madman. I, like you, am relieved to know that I am not the only person who will admit to this problem.

I have so much to tell you. I have been fighting this problem for the last thirteen years and, frankly, was just about ready to give up. Your letter has inspired me to continue the struggle.

I can't explain everything in a letter—I don't know where to begin. Please call me and I will be more than happy to tell you about my whole ordeal.

In the meantime, remember you are not alone and, yes, Bob Hope is violently insane.

Sincerely,
Sally Fox

[Correction]

ENGINE TROUBLE

From a correction that appeared in the March 31 issue of the Chicago Tribune

An article in the March 24 Travel section about Switzerland's *Glacier Express* makes several fanciful erroneous references to *The Little Engine That Could*, a classic children's tale. The article speaks of the little engine pulling a load of toys over the mountain to "needy" children, not "good little boys and girls." The title character, in reality a little blue switching engine, is misidentified as a "tired, workhorse engine"; it was actually one of three that refused to help. And on the downhill side of its successful run, the Little Blue Engine is misquoted as changing its chant from "I think I can—I think I can" to "I knew I could," rather than the proper "I thought I could." The *Tribune* regrets the errors.



From the Austin American-Statesman.

[Graffiti]

READING ROMAN WALLS

From "The Walls Speak," by Antonio Varone, in the March/April issue of Archaeology, *published in New York City. Varone, an Italian archaeologist, has documented and translated from the Latin more than thirty inscriptions from the facades of excavated buildings in Pompeii, Italy.*

Verbal Abuse

Litus, you are a mediocre man. (Wall in the Julia Felix complex)

O Chius, I hope that your ulcerous pustules reopen and burn even more than they did before. (Wall of the basilica)

Love

Whoever loves, go to hell. I want to break Venus' ribs with blows and deform her hips. If she can break my tender heart, why can't I hit her over the head? (Wall of the basilica)

In Nuceria, near Porta Romana, is the district of Venus. Ask for Novellia Primigenia. (Tomb near the Nucerian Gate)

He who sits here, read this before anything else: If you want to make love ask for Attice. The price is 16 asses. (Steps near the Porta Marina)

Atimetus got me pregnant. (Tomb near the Nucerian Gate)

On the ninth of November Quintus Postumius invited Aulus Attius to have homosexual intercourse with me. (Near the Palaestra)

Politics

In Nuceria vote for Lucius Munatius Caesernius Asduovirquinquennalis: He is an honest man. (Tomb near the Nucerian Gate)

Thievery

Lucius Statius Philadelphus, freedman of Gaia, is a thief. (Inside the peristyle of a house)

A bronze vessel has disappeared from this house. There is a 65 sesterce reward for its return and another 20 for the name of the thief. (Entrance to a shop)

Food and Drink

Would that you pay for all your tricks, innkeeper. You sell us water and keep the good wine for yourself. (Wall of a tavern)

...arprised, O wall, that you, who have to bear the weariness of so many writers, are still standing. (Wall of the basilica)

[Conference Paper]

READING BOOKS, GREAT OR OTHERWISE

From "Why We Read," a paper delivered by Katha Pollitt as part of a panel discussion on "The Politics of Culture" at the Columbia University Center for American Culture Studies last winter. Pollitt is a poet and contributing editor of The Nation *magazine; the text of her address appeared in that magazine's September 23 issue.*

What are we to make of the current, sputtering debate over the canon, in which charges of imperialism are met by equally passionate accusations of vandalism, in which each side hates the others and yet each one seems to have its share of reason? Perhaps what we have here is one of those debates in which the opposing sides, unbeknownst to themselves, share a myopia that will turn out to be the most telling feature of the whole discussion.

Something is indeed being overlooked: the state of reading, and books, and literature in our country at this time. Why, ask yourself, is everyone so hot under the collar about what to put on the required-reading shelf? It is because while we have been arguing so fiercely about which books make the best medicine, the patient has been slipping deeper and deeper into a coma.

Let us imagine a country in which reading is a popular voluntary activity. There, parents read books for their own edification and pleasure, and also read to their children, give them books for presents, talk to them about books, and underwrite, with their taxes, a public library system that is open all day, every day. In school—where an attractive library is invariably to be found—the children study certain books together but also have an active reading life of their own. Years later it may even be hard for them to remember if they read *Jane Eyre* at home and Judy Blume in class, or the other way around. In college young people continue to be assigned certain books, but far more important are the books they discover for themselves—browsing in the library, in bookstores, on the shelves of friends, one book leading to another, back and forth in history and across languages and cultures. After graduation they continue to read, and in the fullness of time produce a new generation of readers. O happy land! I wish we all lived there.

In that other country of real readers—voluntary, active, self-determined readers—a debate like the current one over the canon would not be taking place. Or if it did, it would be as a kind of parlor game: What books would *you* take to a desert island? Everyone would know that the top-ten list was merely a tiny fraction of the books one would read in a lifetime. It would not seem racist or sexist or hopelessly hidebound to put Hawthorne on the syllabus and not Toni Morrison. It would be more like putting oatmeal and not noodles on the breakfast menu—a choice part arbitrary, part a nod to the national past, part, dare one say it, a kind of reverse affirmative action: School might frankly be the place where you read the books that are a little off-putting, that have gone a little cold, that you might pass over because they do not address, in reader-friendly contemporary fashion, the issues most immediately at stake in modern life, but that, with a little study, turn out to have a great deal to say. Being on the list wouldn't mean so much. It might even add to a writer's cachet *not* to be on the list, to be in one way or another too heady, too daring, too exciting to be ground up into institutional fodder for teenagers.

In America today the assumption underlying the canon debate is that the books on the list are the only books that are going to be read. Becoming a textbook is a book's only chance; all sides take that for granted. And so all agree not to mention certain things that they themselves, as highly educated people and, one assumes, devoted readers, know perfectly well: That if you read only twenty-five, or fifty, or a hundred books, you can't understand them, however well chosen they are. That if you don't have an independent reading life—and very few students do—you won't *like* reading the books on the list and will forget them the minute you finish them. And that books have, or should have, lives beyond the syllabus—thus, the totally misguided attempt to put current literature in the classroom. How strange to think that people need professorial help to read John Updike or Alice Walker, writers people actually do read for fun. But all sides agree: If it isn't taught, it doesn't count.

Let's look at the canon question from another angle. Instead of asking what books we want others to read, let's ask why we read books ourselves. I think the canon debaters are being a little disingenuous here, are suppressing, in the interest of their own agendas, their personal ex-

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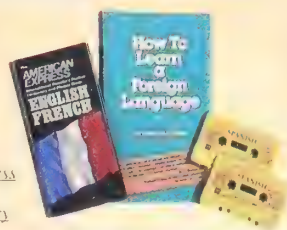


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INSTANT CLASSICS

From the Lexicon Recentis Latinitas, *a dictionary of contemporary Latin to be published this month by the Vatican. The 18,000-word dictionary is the first formal updating of the Latin used by the Vatican in almost thirty years; 75 percent of the entries are terms that have never had Latin equivalents.*

AIDS: *syndrome comparati defectus immunitatis*
amnesia: *memoriae amissio*
Amnesty International: *Societas Internationalis ab Amnestia*
baby doll: *tunicula dormitoria*
baby-sitter: *infantaria*
Baccarat crystal: *crystallus Bacaratianus*
bestseller: *liber maxime divenditus*
bicycle: *birota*
bidet: *ovata pelvis*
bottlewasher: *machina lagoenis expurgandis*
brainwashing: *coercitio mentis*
car wash: *autocinetorum lavatrix*
carburetor: *aeris benzinique mixtura*
cellulite: *cellulitis*
Christmas tree: *arbor natalicia*
cover girl: *exterioris paginae puella*
disc brakes: *sufflamen disci forma*
discotheque: *orbium phonographicorum theca*
dishwasher: *escariorum lavator*
fax: *exemplum simillime expressum*
factotum: *omnium negotiorum curator*
fair play: *modus probus humanusque*
flamenco: *Vandaliciana saltatio*
flash bulb: *fulgor photographicus*
flashback: *interiecta scaena memorativa*
to flirt: *lusorie amare*
flirtation: *amor levis; lascivia brevis*
guerrilla warfare: *bellum tectum*
gulag: *campus captivis custodiendis*
hypertension: *hypertensio*
hypnotherapy: *hypnotherapia*
leased property: *locatio in emptionem convertibilis*
pinball machine: *sphaeriludium electricum nomismate actum*
photocopy: *exemplar luce expressum*
refrigerator: *cella frigorifera*
secret agent: *speculator tectus*
to slack off on the job: *neglegenter operor*
sycophant: *assentator turpissimus; adulator impudens*
television: *instrumentum televisificum*
traffic jam: *fluxus interclusio*
travel agency: *itinerum procuratio*
warmonger: *belli instigator*
washing machine: *machina linteorum lavatoria*

perience of reading. Sure, we read to understand our American culture and history, and to rediscover wrongly neglected masterpieces, and to learn more about the accomplishments of our subgroup and thereby increase our self-esteem. But what about reading for the aesthetic pleasures of language, form, image? What about reading to learn something new, to have a vicarious adventure, to follow the workings of an interesting, if possibly skewed, narrow, and ill-tempered mind? What about reading for the story? For an expanded sense of sheer human variety? There are a thousand reasons why a book might have a claim on our time and attention other than its canonization. I once infuriated an acquaintance by asserting that Trollope, although in many ways a lesser writer than Dickens, possessed some wonderful qualities Dickens lacked: a more realistic view of women, a more skeptical view of good intentions, a subtler sense of humor, a drier vision of life that I myself found congenial. You'd think I'd advocated throwing Dickens out and replacing him with a toaster. Because Dickens is a certified Great Writer, and Trollope is not.

All sides in the canon debate seem to agree that the purpose of reading is none of the many varied and delicious satisfactions I've mentioned; it's medicinal. The chief end of reading is to produce a desirable kind of person and a desirable kind of society. A respectful, high-minded citizen of a unified society for the conservatives, an up-to-date and flexible sort for the liberals, a subgroup-identified, robustly confident one for the radicals. How pragmatic, how moralistic, how American! The culture debaters turn out to share a secret suspicion of culture itself, as well as the antipornographer's belief that there is a simple, one-to-one correlation between books and behavior. Read the conservatives' list and produce a nation of sexists and racists—or a nation of philosopher kings. Read the liberals' list and produce a nation of spineless relativists—or a nation of open-minded world citizens. Read the radicals' list and produce a nation of psychobabblers and ancestor worshipers—or a nation of stalwart proud-to-be-me pluralists.

But is there any list of a few dozen books that can have such a magical effect, for good or for ill? Of course not. It's like arguing that a perfectly nutritional breakfast cereal is enough food for the whole day. And so the canon debate is really an argument about what books to cram down the resistant throats of a resentful captive populace of students; and the trick is never to mention the fact that, in such circumstances, one book is as good, or bad, as another. Because, as the debaters know from their own experience as readers, books are not pills that produce health when ingested in measured doses. Books do not shape character in any simple way—if, indeed, they

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all—or the most literate would be the ...ious instead of just the ordinary run of humanity with larger vocabularies. Books cannot mold a common national purpose when, in fact, people are honestly divided about what kind of country they want—and are divided, moreover, for very good and practical reasons, as they always have been.

For these burly purposes, books are all but useless. The way books affect us is an altogether more subtle, delicate, wayward, and individual, not to say private, affair. And that reading is being made to bear such an inappropriate and simplistic burden speaks to the poverty both of culture and of frank political discussion in our time.

On his deathbed, Dr. Johnson—once canonical, now more admired than read—is supposed to have said to a friend who was energetically rearranging his bedclothes, "Thank you, this will do all that a pillow can do." One might say that the canon debaters are all asking of their handful of chosen books that they do a great deal more than any handful of books can do.

[Essay]

SELLING OUR INNOCENCE ABROAD

From "The Contagion of Innocence," by Pico Iyer, in the Fall issue of New Perspectives Quarterly, *one in a series of essays on America's place in the world. Iyer, who lives in Santa Barbara, California, is the author of* Video Night in Kathmandu *and* The Lady and the Monk.

There is a genuine sense in many parts of the world that America is being left behind by the rise of a unified Europe and the new East Asian powers. The largest debtor nation in the world, where ten million blacks live in poverty and whose capital, run by a cocaine addict, had a murder rate during the Eighties higher than that of Sri Lanka or Beirut, seems an unlikely model for emulation. And yet America maintains a powerful hold on the world's imagination.

A visitor today in Vietnam, one of the last of America's official enemies, will find crowds in Hue, in waterside cafes, desperate to get a glimpse of Meryl Streep on video; at night, in Dalat, he will hear every last word of "Hotel California" floating across Sighing Lake. In Bhutan, where all the citizens must wear traditional medieval dress and all the buildings must be constructed in thirteenth-century style—in Bhutan, perhaps the most tightly closed country in the world, which has never seen more than 3,000 tourists in a single year—the pirated version of Eddie Murphy's *Coming to America* went on sale well before the video had ever come to America.

All this, of course, is hardly surprising and hardly new. Pop culture makes the world go round, and America makes the best pop culture. By now, indeed, such products represent the largest single source of America's export earnings, even as America remains the single most popular destination for immigrants. The more straitened or shut off a culture, the more urgent its hunger for the qualities it associates with America: freedom, wealth, and modernity. The Japanese may be the leaders in technology, the Europeans may have a stronger and more self-conscious sense of their aesthetic heritage, yet in the world of movies and songs and images America is still, and long will continue to be, the Great Communicator. The capital of the world, as Gore Vidal has said, is not Washington but Hollywood. And however much America suffers an internal loss of faith, it will continue to enjoy, abroad, some of the immunity that attaches to all things in the realm of myth. As much as we—and everyone else—assume that the French make the best perfumes and the Swiss the finest watches, the suspicion will continue that Americans make the best dreams.

As borders crumble and cultures mingle, more and more of us are becoming hyphenated. I, perhaps, am an increasingly typical example: entirely Indian by blood, yet unable to speak a word of any Indian language; a British citizen, born and educated in England, yet never having really worked or lived in the country of my birth; an American permanent resident who has made his home for two thirds of his life in America, in part because it feels so little like home; and a would-be resident of Japan. As people like me proliferate, and Filipinos in San Francisco marry Salvadorans, and Germans in Japan take home women from Kyoto, the global village becomes internalized, until more and more of us are products of everywhere and citizens of nowhere.

And though Paris, Tokyo, and Sydney are all in their way natural meeting points for this multi-polar culture, America, as the traditional land of immigrants, is still the spiritual home of the very notion of integration. Everyone feels at home in only two places, Milos Forman has said: at home and in America. That is one reason why America's domination of pop culture is unlikely to subside, even if the reality of American power increasingly seems a thing of the past. The notion of America itself attracts more and

[Stamps]

FRED AND BARNEY'S MONGOLIAN ADVENTURE



From a series of postage stamps issued by the Mongolian Post Office in February. The stamps, which depict the Flintstones visiting the Gobi Desert, are produced by the Mongolian government to generate income through sales to collectors in other countries; they are also available in Mongolia to be used for postage. Commemorative stamps are a major source of income for many developing countries; last year Equatorial Guinea and Guyana each issued more than twice as many stamps as the United States. The Flintstones stamps were designed by Mongolian artists following guidelines set by Hanna-Barbera, the cartoon's creator.

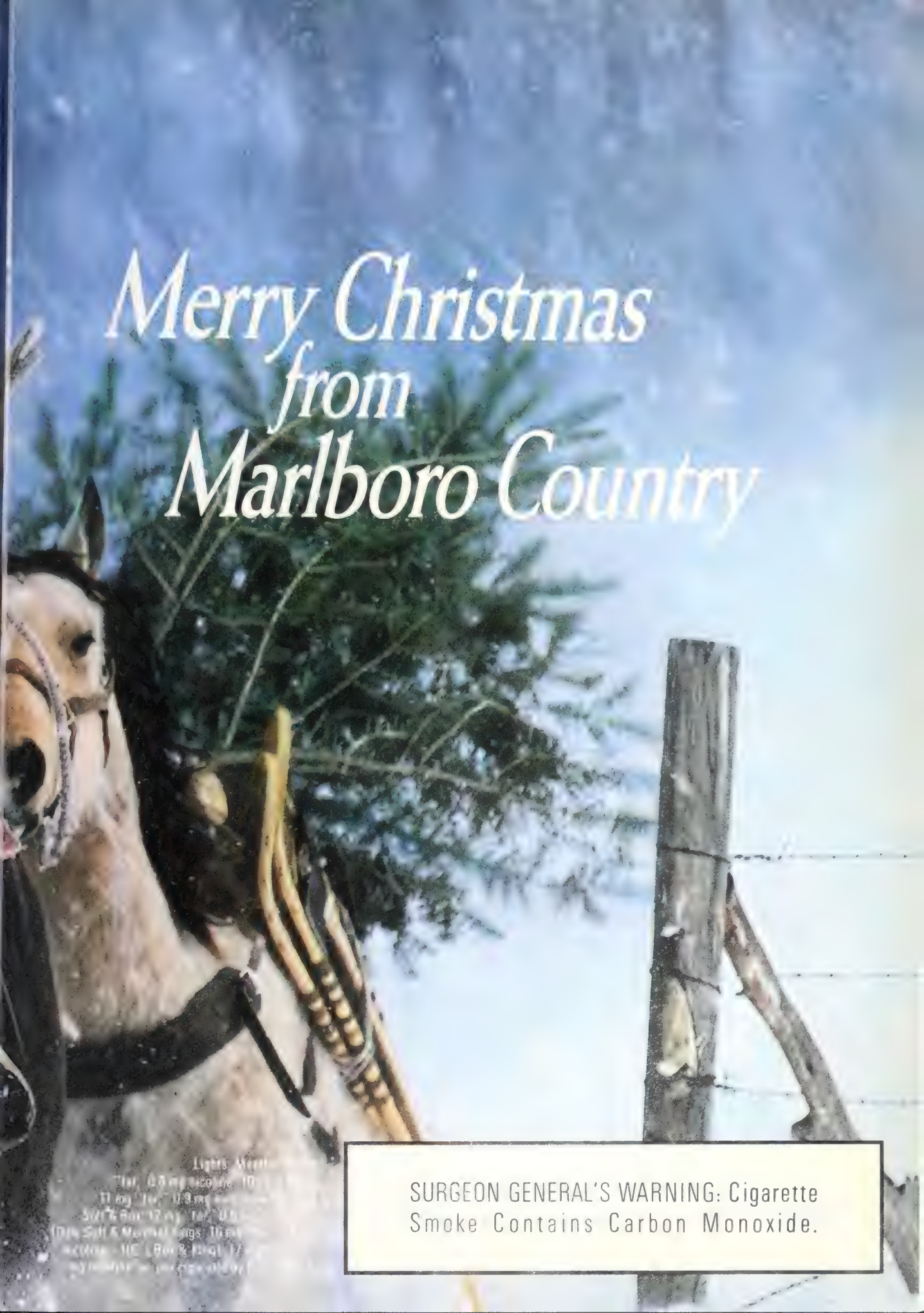
more people to come and revive or refresh the notion of America. And the more international a culture is, the more, very often, it draws from the center of internationalism—the United States. The French may rail against cultural imperialism and try to enforce a kind of aesthetic protectionism by striving to keep out *le burger* and *le video*. But as soon as Madonna shows up in Cannes—so efficient is her command of all the media and so self-perpetuating her allure—she sets off the biggest stir in thirty years.

Madonna's global appeal is not unlike that of the Kentucky Fried Chicken parlor in Tiananmen Square: Both provide a way for people to align themselves, however fleetingly, with a world that is—in imagination at least—quick and flashy and rich. The lure of the foreign is quickened by the lure of the forbidden.

I got my own best sense of this in a friend's apartment in Havana some years ago. My friend was an intellectual dissident, fluent in several languages, eager to talk about Spinoza and Saroyan, and able to make a living by reading people's futures from their photographs and translating the latest Top 40 hits—recorded from radio stations in Miami—into Spanish. One night, trying to convey his desperation to escape, he pulled out what was clearly his most precious possession: a copy of Michael Jackson's album *Bad*, on which he had scrawled some heartfelt appeals to Jackson to rescue him. He did not, I suspect, know that Jackson was reclusive, eccentric, and about as likely to respond to political appeals as Donald Duck. What he did know was that Jackson was black, rich, and sexually ambiguous—all things that it is not good to be in Castro's Cuba. What he also knew was that Jackson had succeeded on his own terms, an individual who had proved himself stronger than the system. The less my friend knew about Jackson the man, the closer he could feel to Jackson the symbol. And so it is with America: Since the America that he coveted does not quite exist, it is immutable, a talisman that will fail him only if he comes here.

People everywhere, whatever their circumstances, will always have a hunger for innocence, and America seems to have a limitless supply of that resource. Somehow the moguls of Hollywood and Broadway and Nashville—perhaps because they were immigrants themselves, with half a heart on the streets they left—have never lost their common touch: *E.T.* and *Back to the Future* strike universal chords as surely as *Gone With the Wind* and *Casablanca* did half a century ago. These stories continue to affect us because they speak to our most innocent dreams. To renounce them would be to renounce our own innocence.





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[Phone Transcript]

CHATTING WITH MY IDOL'S DAD

From an interview with Richard Harry, the father of rock singer Debbie Harry, in the February issue of Blondie Fanzine, *published in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The interview was conducted by Brian LaFountain, a longtime fan of Debbie Harry's, who was given the Harrys' phone number by a musician acquainted with the family. Debbie Harry was the lead singer of the rock group Blondie until the band broke up in 1982.*

MR. HARRY: Hello.

BRIAN: Yes, my name is Brian LaFountain. I need to speak with, uh, possibly, Richard or Catherine.

MR. HARRY: Richard speaking.

BRIAN: Yes, Richard, um, I don't want to sound really impersonal, but the reason I'm calling is, I'm a big fan of Debbie's.

MR. HARRY: Uh-huh.

BRIAN: Incredible fan. I'm twenty-one, twenty-three! What am I saying?—I'm twenty-three, and there is a group of us that are hardcore fans, and we've been following her for a while. We've started things like a Debbie collectors society, and, um, I had mentioned to everybody that I might be able to talk to you, just to say hello, because I thought that would be incredible.

(*Mr. Harry laughs.*)

BRIAN: And I think it's just an honor to talk to you, and I want to tell you, you did a wonderful job raising Debbie!

MR. HARRY: We think so, too! We're a little conceited that way—we think we raised Debbie pretty good ourselves!

BRIAN: She is just phenomenal! And I just think it's an honor to talk to you. I mean, I don't want to seem really weird or crazy, but—

MR. HARRY: Well, no. I appreciate it.

BRIAN: You probably get these calls—

MR. HARRY: (*interrupting*) Her music is changing a little bit. I'm a little disappointed.

BRIAN: Changing? You mean, too pop?

MR. HARRY: Well, I don't know. It's not like "Heart of Glass" or "Call Me."

BRIAN: "Heart of Glass" is my anthem, my favorite song in the world.

MR. HARRY: That's what I mean. But her recent album, it doesn't sound like it.

BRIAN: This is really weird, talking to her dad. It's really weird!

MR. HARRY: How many are in the club down there?

BRIAN: There are about eighteen of us that I would say are heavy-duty.

MR. HARRY: Well, I was gonna send you signed pictures. Hang on, I'll check.

BRIAN: Oh, God!

MR. HARRY: (*long pause*) Yeah, I have some I can send you.

BRIAN: Signed Debbie photos! The only autograph I've ever had was when she signed my T-shirt while I was wearing it!

(*Mr. Harry laughs.*)

BRIAN: I cannot even describe to you—I have thousands of dollars' worth of Debbie Harry merchandise, a virtual shrine!

MR. HARRY: My God!

BRIAN: I'd like to tell her that, but I always thought that she would think I was this freak, this weirdo. But actually I'm not!

MR. HARRY: Uh-huh.

BRIAN: But I've always wanted to tell her that—how devoted and appreciative of her I am. Everyone that's in this circle has thousands of dollars in their collection. And we want her to know how much we appreciate her.

MR. HARRY: I'll tell her.

BRIAN: We're all behind her!

MR. HARRY: That's very good to hear.

BRIAN: Okay!

MR. HARRY: Thank you again.

BRIAN: Thank you! Bye-bye.

MR. HARRY: Bye-bye now.

[Story]

THE SIXTIES

By David Shields. From A Handbook for Drowning, *a collection of stories to be published next month by Knopf. In an author's note, Shields explains that this piece is a response to Leonard Michaels's story "In the Fifties." Shields is the author of* Dead Languages, *a novel.*

The Sixties—which, as everybody knows, began in 1963 and ended in 1974—happened, like a sitcom, in the middle of my living room.

I was student-body president of one of the first desegregated elementary schools in California, and when the BBC came to interview me, I spoke so passionately that they had to stop filming because the cameraman was crying.

By the end of seventh grade it was a profound social embarrassment if you hadn't "gotten married," which meant lost your virginity.

The third-floor roof of our high school overlooked the pool in the middle of the courtyard. People who were tripping would jump off the top of the roof into the pool on Saturday nights. Occasionally the pool would have been drained. If someone dove into the empty pool,



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'They fuck you up, your mum and dad,' Philip Larkin wrote, but Philip Larkin got it wrong. There are also your brothers and your sisters. And your uncles, your grandfather, your endless cousins, your second cousins, your mother-in-law, your father-in-law and your children. There are always the children.

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Sappho Durrell, daughter of the novelist, obsessed by her father—wanting to love him, wanting to kill him.

William Wharton determined to represent the intense, unrelenting detail of an unspeakable loss.

Geoffrey Wolff on the bliss of a family properly on course.

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[illegible] Beheader."

[illegible]me, who wore miniskirts and leather jackets and was by far the school's best girl swimmer, drowned when she tried to swim from Lido Isle all the way out to Catalina immediately after a huge lunch of hash brownies.

A married couple who worked for the McGovern campaign, Janice and Michael, came down from Seattle and stayed in our house from the California primary until the general election. I had such a bad crush on Janice that, on the night of Nixon's landslide, I disconnected the car radio so she'd still be in a good enough mood to come with me as I took old people around to the polls until closing.

I wrote so many satires about capital punishment for my high school newspaper that students who didn't read carefully started calling me "The Beheader."

I heard a rumor that Smith Corona also made munitions and immediately switched to Olivetti.

As the editor of the *Observer*, the newspaper of the California Democratic Party, my father was at times caught in the middle between opponents and defenders of the Vietnam War. He finally ran a cartoon that showed LBJ surfing off the coast of Cambodia, which made the point about American imperialism. The caption my father wrote was "Up Surf." He was fired within the month, not because of the content of the cartoon but because he didn't know the idiom.

The majority of my nieces and nephews on both sides of my family have first names that are either colors, animals, or trees, or some combination of colors, animals, or trees.

Freshman year of high school we all had to take world geography, and the first day of class we all had to come on stage and tell "Glen" what kind of animal we were, then portray this animal for a few seconds. The entire semester there was no mention of anything even remotely related to world geography.

The ecology club held a massive demonstration and littered the courtyard with so many placards that I abandoned my capital-punishment theme and wrote a satire about the event. The ecology club retaliated by toilet-papering my house.

My cousin had a phrase, "'Tain't no big thang." No one knew where he got it, whether or when it was meant sincerely, or ironically, but he said it in response to almost every possible development.

Just before graduating college, he and his girlfriend were arrested for possession of a thousand tabs of acid. His girlfriend told the cops she was going to use them to decorate a Christmas tree. "In June?" one cop asked. "'Tain't no big thang," my cousin said.

For sociology class I interviewed sixteen different cliques in our high school and found that precisely three quarters of the groups made "insider/outsider" distinctions not on the basis of money, appearance, academics, after-school job, or sports. Precisely three quarters of the groups made "insider/outsider" distinctions on the basis of what kind of drugs you used.

In an article in *Newsweek*, our high school was reported to have the highest drug use per capita of any high school in the United States, and people threw parties for a month straight to protect our number-one ranking.

A friend of my sister's had a life-threatening case of colitis and traveled all over India, looking for a holistic cure, and finally settled for Transcendental Meditation, which seemed to do the trick. Now, if you ask her if she wants to do almost anything, she'll say, "Gotta have time to smell the roses," which is, of course, just another version of "'Tain't no big thang."

My sister and her best friend had a bitter fight, from which the relationship never recovered, over who was the cutest Monkee, Davy or Mickey.

I broke up with my girlfriend when one day she decided she couldn't stand it any longer and went ahead and shaved her legs.

A friend of my father's lived less than a block from where the Symbionese Liberation Army was being busted on live TV, so we all hurried over to this friend's house, and kept one eye on the television and the other eye out the window. "It's so real I feel like I can almost smell the smoke," someone said. "You *can* smell the smoke," my father answered. The SLA was burning to death and smoke was pouring in an open window.

In the fall of 1974 I left Los Angeles to go to college in Providence, Rhode Island, which I imagined as, quite literally, Providence, a heavenly city populated by seraphic souls. I imagined Rhode Island as an actual island, the exotic edge of the eastern coast. And I saw Brown as enclosed, paradisal space in which strong boys played rugby on fields of snow and then perused Ruskin by gas lamps in marble libraries too old to close; and girls, with thick black hair, good bodies, and great minds, talked about Turgenev at breakfast. The first month of my first semester, black students occupied the administration building and demanded increases in black student enrollment and financial aid. These seemed to me laudable goals, so I went over to become part of the picket line outside the administration building and marched in a circle, chanting, for a few minutes, but the whole event seemed like a really weak imitation of all the demonstrations I'd been going to since I was six years old, and I wanted to get away from groups and the West Coast and my former milieu for a while. A few people from my dormitory hall were tossing around a Frisbee on the back side of the green, and I left the picket line to go join them. That, for me, was the end of the Sixties.

[Portraits]

GREAT RUSSIANS, AUGUST '91



SERGEI BELIAEV
AGE 24; MILITIAMAN



ANDREI NAZARIEV
AGE 23; PILOT



MAYA PETROVITCHEVA
AGE 19; UNEMPLOYED



PAVEL SCOVORODIN
AGE 23; DOCTOR



EKATERINA ZLOBINA
AGE 55; RETIRED



VICTOR RAKHONAYOV
AGE 24; ECONOMIST



ROMA KHABIBOV
AGE 37; WORKER



CARINA VASSILIEVA
AGE 24; ACTRESS



ALEXANDER REBICOV
AGE 23; PLUMBER

From the September 15 Sunday magazine of The Independent *of London. These photographs of Soviet citizens who defended the Russian parliament building for three days and nights last August were taken by Wojtek Laski and Vladimir Sichov shortly after the coup. Laski and Sichov shot the portraits in a makeshift studio they set up in a police station near the barricades.*

BOMBAY SAPPHIRE.
POUR SOMETHING PRICELES
FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

WHAT ARE UNIVERSITIES FOR?

The real crisis on campus is one of identity

By Louis Menand

Several times in the last few years I have taught a course called Introduction to Poetry. The class was always overenrolled; I usually spent the beginning of the first few meetings turning students away. Its popularity had nothing to do with me—I was one of many instructors, teaching one of many sections, and all the sections were overenrolled. Introduction to Poetry was popular because it happened to satisfy three requirements: It was a prerequisite for English department courses; it could be used as the final installment in a sequence of composition courses all students had to take; and, as a "humanities" elective, it satisfied a college-wide distribution requirement.

There are 18,000 students at my school, which is one campus of a public university. Most of them are pursuing careers in fields remote from literature; many know English only as a second language. These students approach a course on poetry with the same sense of dread with which most English majors might approach an advanced course in statistics. Other students, though, are eager to take an English course—not because they hope to acquire an appreciation of poetry, but because they believe it will enhance their communications skills and help them get into law school. And there are a few students who want to become English majors because English literature is their primary academic interest.

All of these types of students have turned up in every section of Introduction to Poetry, so I found myself trying to teach some of my students how to write a grammatical sentence, to introduce others to the academic study of literature, and to give the rest of them—though most were essentially unacquainted with serious literary culture—exposure to the best that has been thought and said in the world. For the majority of the students, of course (as they were not shy about making me aware), the principal object was to secure the passing grade needed to fulfill whatever requirement happened to apply in their case. You could walk away from a session of Introduction to Poetry feeling that whatever the current public debate over the univer-

Louis Menand teaches English at Queens College and at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He is a Guggenheim Foundation fellow this year.

, NO EVIDENCE TO
T THAT IN FOUR YEARS
T TRYING TO WIN GRADES
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
JOBS OR GRADUATE SCHOOL,
STUDENTS BECOME RADICALIZED

sity was about—"political correctness," deconstruction, "multiculturalism," the canon—what you had just spent the last hour or so doing had very lit tle to do with it. Ideology was about as remote a presence in an Introduc tion to Poetry classroom as leather bindings.

In all the uproar over the academy—which entered the mainstream c public debate in 1987 with Allan Bloom's best-selling *The Closing of the Amer ican Mind*, and which has produced, more recently, Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals*, Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education* (also a bestseller), cover sto ries in almost every news and opinion magazine of note, and even some ob servations in a commencement address last spring by President Bush—n one has bothered to ask what practical effect the so-called politicization o the humanities has actually had on the undergraduate mind. Seventy-fou percent of the nation's freshman class last year described themselves, in poll conducted by the American Council on Education, as politically mid dle-of-the-road or conservative. When they were asked why they chose t attend college, the most popular answer, picked by 78 percent, was to "ge a better job," followed by to "make more money" (73 percent). Asked to nam an objective they considered "essential or very important," 74 percent chos "being very well-off financially"; second place went to "raising a family," named by 70 percent (an answer almost equally popular among male an female students).

There is no evidence I know of to suggest that in four years spent tryin to win the grades and recommendations needed for jobs or for admission t graduate or professional school, these students become radicalized, or are i any way deflected from the social mainstream, by the few humanities cours es they are required to take. Students enrolled in Introduction to Poetry woul learn just as much about poetry from a professor who thought Milton wa a sexist as they would from one who didn't—which is to say, in either case that they would have had to read and talk for a few hours about a writer o whom they would otherwise remain essentially ignorant. The professor's po litical slant, if it can be ferreted out, makes a difference to most students on ly insofar as it might determine the kind of questions likely to turn up o an exam. The effect the course might have on those students' good opin ion of Milton—or of any other poet they are likely to be required to read— is a microscopic influence, rapidly diminishing to zero as college recede behind them, on their ultimate sense of things.

The educational ethos is different at a selective, residential, private col lege. There students are likely to be better primed to become personally en gaged with the course material; they are also likely to feel the loss of incom higher education represents less acutely, which enables them to enter int the spirit of their instruction with their eyes a little less fixed on the bot tom line. Students at elite colleges identify much more strongly with thei professors: They want to argue the nuances and to pick up the insights. Bu in the end the practical impact is much the same. Anyone who has taugh literature at such a school knows the phenomenon: The brightest student happily learn the most advanced styles of contemporary critical theory with all of their radical political implications, and then they apply, with equa good cheer, to business school. Whatever subversiveness they have ingest ed has mostly served to give them a kind of superior intellectual sophisti cation that they are right to feel is not in the least bit incompatible wit professional success on Wall Street or Madison Avenue.

Academic thought may have been heading left in the last ten years or so in other words, but college students themselves have been heading straigh into the mainstream. Even comfortably middle-class students feel an eco nomic imperative almost unknown to middle-class students of twenty year ago. When I was a freshman, in 1969, I didn't have a thought in my hea about how I was eventually going to support myself. I suppose I imagined tha I would just hitchhike around the country with my guitar (which I didn' know how to play) reciting my poetry (which I didn't know how to write).

In the 1990s, though, young people in the middle class are perfectl

live to the fact that they go to college because they have to; young peo-
le not in the middle class continue to go to college for the reason they al-
ways have, which is to get into the middle class. It seems to me that there
s every good reason to challenge these students for a semester or two to think
vith a little balanced skepticism about the conventional wisdom of the so-
iety they are so anxious to join. But whether they're being taught skepti-
ism or not, literature classes are the last places students are likely to be getting
heir values. Madonna has done more to affect the way young people think
bout sexuality than all the academic gender theorists put together. Perhaps
)'Souza should write a book about her.

It's easier, of course, to attack Catharine Stimpson, the former dean of the
raduate school at Rutgers and former president of the Modern Language
Association, who has become one of the point persons in the defense of new
academic trends. Stimpson doesn't appear on MTV, so there isn't a tidal wave
of popular sentiment to overcome before one can take her to task. But the
ack of a mass following ought to be a clue to the extent of Stimpson's, or
ny other academic's, real influence on the culture at large. A group of lit-
rature professors calling themselves Teachers for a Democratic Culture
as come together this fall to launch a counteroffensive against the attack
n "political correctness." I suspect that it's a little late in the day for a coun-
eroffensive: The center on this issue has already been grabbed. But one of the arguments this new group wants to make is that the whole situation has been exaggerated. I think it's a just complaint.

It isn't hard to guess the motives behind the controversy in its present melodramatic mode. It is always tempting to blame bad conditions on bad ideas, and it must seem to conservatives that since liberal and leftist thinking has been driven out of nearly every other part of American life, the pitiful remnant of left-wing ideology that has taken refuge in university literature departments must be the reason social problems so disobligingly persist. It is the good fortune of conservatives that this is a view that meets exactly the belief of some of the professors being attacked, which is that they are in possession of the one ground—the humanities curriculum of American colleges—on which real social change might be accomplished. The American media, for their rather inflammatory part, are always happy to find an occasion not to appear too liberal, and the excesses of "political correctness" are the perfect thing to get noisily to the right of. The whole controversy is marvelously apt in a country that no longer shows any interest in publicly funded social programs; for whichever political faction wins control of the undergraduate reading list, no taxpayer dollars will have been spent.

This doesn't mean that there's not a crisis. But the issue is not whether (in the words of some of the demonstrators against Stanford's core curriculum a few years ago) Western culture's got to go. Western culture, whether it's in good odor at the Modern Language Association these days or not, we're stuck with. The real issue concerns the role of higher education in American life. Too many people are fighting over how much T. S. Eliot versus how much Alice Walker young minds ought to be exposed to, and not enough people are asking why undergraduate English courses should be bearing the load of this debate in the first place. What is it we are expecting colleges to do that makes the particular mix of the reading lists in literature courses seem to spell the difference between—well, between culture and anarchy?

Matthew Arnold is, indeed, the name most frequently associated with the traditional idea of liberal arts education that the new wave of "politicization" in the academy is supposed to be wrecking. But the liberal arts com-

MADONNA HAS DONE MORE TO AFFECT THE WAY YOUNG PEOPLE THINK ABOUT SEXUALITY THAN ALL THE ACADEMIC GENDER THEORISTS PUT TOGETHER

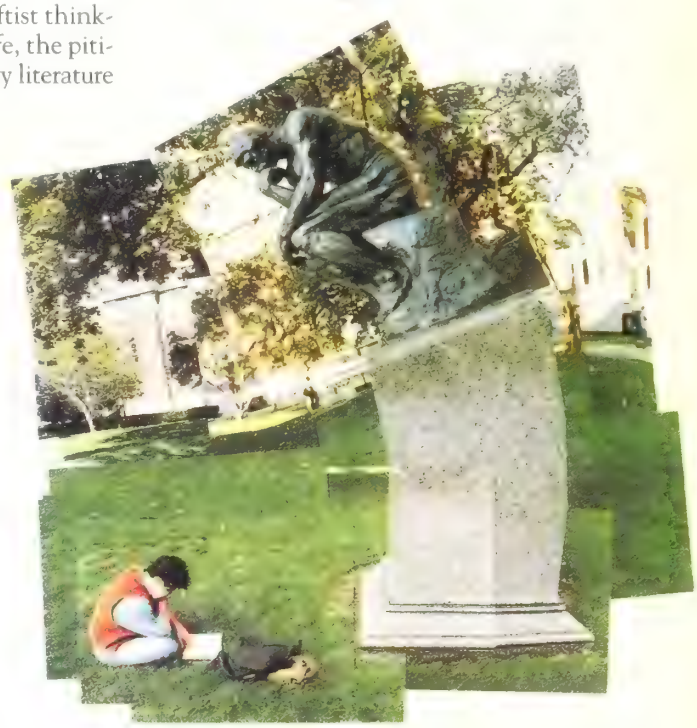


Photo collages by Jeremy Wolff

THE ARNOLDIAN PROGRAM OF USING HUMANISTIC STUDIES AS A MEANS OF MORAL INSTRUCTION ENTERED THE MODERN UNIVERSITY ALMOST AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT

ponent of higher education belongs to what is in some ways the least salient of the university's social functions. In fact, the Arnoldian program of using humanistic studies as a means of moral instruction, far from being the most venerable of the university's activities, entered the modern university almost as an afterthought.

The modern university in America is defined by two features, both of which date from the late nineteenth century: the existence of an elective curriculum for undergraduates and the existence of a graduate school, which trains the people who teach the undergraduates. The elective system was not designed to disseminate culture. When Charles William Eliot instituted the first elective system, at Harvard in 1883, his idea was to allow college students to "track" themselves in the direction of their future careers—not to acquire a common culture, but to specialize according to individual needs. Eliot believed that college ought to play a vocational role, to serve a frankly utilitarian function. His faith in the real-world utility of academic studies was great enough, in fact, to allow him, in 1901, to praise the assembled scholars of the Modern Language Association, virtually all of whom were philologists, by telling them that their work enjoyed "a vital connection with the industrial and commercial activities of the day."

At the same time, Eliot saw the need to provide specialists to train college students, and in 1890 he established the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, modeled on the first research institution in the country, Johns Hopkins (founded in 1876). The principal function of the graduate school is the production of teachers, whom it certifies with the doctoral degree, to staff the modern college; but it also produces scholarly research, and the research ideal is expressly nonutilitarian. The researcher cannot be influenced by what the world will find profitable: The goal is knowledge for its own sake, without regard for "the industrial and commercial activities of the day."



So there was already in the modern university, as Eliot and the other late-nineteenth-century pioneers of higher education helped to create it, a contradiction between what professors do, which is to follow their research interests, and what their students do, which is to prepare for careers outside the academy—to pursue "education for experience," as Eliot called it. There is no reason, of course, as William James complained in 1903 in an essay called "The Ph.D. Octopus," why the possession of a doctorate, earned by scholarship, should serve as a credential for teaching undergraduates; yet these separate functions were made to complement each other, and by the end of the nineteenth century the ideals of research and of vocational training had achieved such an ascendancy in American universities that a reaction against them occurred on behalf of what was called, by many of its champions, "liberal culture." This reaction is the origin of the idea that college is the place for future social leaders to be exposed to, in Arnold's phrase, "the study of perfection." The liberal arts "tradition" that the new scholarship is accused of trashing, in other words, is not even a century old.

The "true aim of culture," wrote Hiram Corson, the chairman of the Cornell English department and a proponent of "liberal culture," in 1894, is "to induce soul states or conditions, soul attitudes, to attune the inward forces to the idealized forms of nature and of human life produced by art, and not to make the head a cockloft for storing away the trumpery of barren knowledge." This ideal is both anti-utilitarian and anti-research, and the reaction on its behalf was successful enough to lead, in 1909, to Eliot's replacement as president of Harvard by A. Lawrence Lowell—a member of the faculty who, many years before, had opposed the institution of the elective system. Thus emerged the third mission of the modern academy: the liberalization, through exposure to art, literature,

ınd philosophy, of the undergraduate mind.

Although no school was ever purely one type or another, universities be ore 1910 could be distinguished according to their leading educational deals: Harvard was utilitarian, for example; Johns Hopkins, Clark, and Chicago were research institutions. Schools like Princeton and Yale tend d to resist both these trends. But after 1910 (as Laurence Veysey explains n *The Emergence of the American University*) there was a shift. Educators topped arguing about ideals; the various versions of what properly consti uted higher education were no longer regarded as conflicting. The university earned to accommodate divergent views of its purpose, and the goal of the people who administered universities became not the defense of an educa ional philosophy but the prosperity of the institution. And the prosperity of the institution depended on its being, to as great an extent as it found pos ible, all things to all people.

This is how a pedagogical portmanteau like Introduction to Poetry could come into being—a single course on a specific subject expected to serve, all at the same time, a utilitarian function (by training students how to read and write), a research function (by preparing future English majors for the scholarly study of literature), and a liberal arts function (by exposing students to the leavening influence of high culture).

Even at schools where there is no actual Introduction to Poetry course, the overall effect of the undergraduate curriculum is the same. Students in the humanities are expected to major in a field—French, say, or religion—that will provide them with a lot of knowledge most of which will be useful only in the unlikely event they decide to enter graduate school and become professors themselves. At the same time, they are required to fulfill "distribution" requirements designed to expose them to smatterings of learning in every major area—with the vague idea that this contributes to something approximating genuine well-roundedness, and thus serves a "liberalizing" function.

> And there is the expectation, now almost universal, that beyond college lies professional school, for which some practical training will be useful.

It's possible to argue that these three educational functions—scholarly, vocational, and liberalizing—are only three ways of looking at the same thing, which is the exposure to knowledge. For higher education in any field certainly can serve, simultaneously, all three purposes: pure speculation, practical application, and general enlightenment. Even so, there needs to be a consensus that these benefits are worth pursuing, and that the traditional structure of the university provides the best means of doing so, in order for the system to work effectively. Three recent developments, none of them having to do explicitly with politics—illiberal or not—seem to me to have undermined this consensus.

The first is the major demographic change in the undergraduate population over the last twenty years, a change that reflects both a significant increase in the proportion of people who attend college (from 1970 to 1988, the percentage of Americans who had completed four years of college doubled) and a significant increase on most campuses in the proportion of students who are not white or not male. This means that the average college class is not the relatively homogeneous group, culturally and socio-economically speaking, it once was: The level of preparation among students differs more widely, and their interests and assumptions differ as well.

Since the whole idea of liberal arts education is to use literature and philosophy as a way of learning how to value one's interests and assumptions, it is (or it ought to be) obviously absurd to insist that books that served this function when the audience was predominantly made up of young middle-class white men can serve the same function now that the audience is more diverse. When Columbia College admitted women for the first time, in 1983, it was suddenly realized by the faculty that the reading list for Humanities A, the famous great books course required of all students, had

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never included a book by a woman. Though for years it had been advertised as representing the best that the educated person needed to know, the list was changed: Sappho and Jane Austen became great writers. It took some fancy rhetoric to explain why this adjustment didn't amount to a confession that "the great books" is really just a grand name for "the books that will expose students to ideas we want them at the moment to be talking about." And that is part of the problem; for since so much has been emotionally (and, I think, mistakenly) invested in the traditional great books curriculum, changes can't happen without resentment and reaction.

The second development putting pressure on traditional educational ideals is the spread of critical theory as a kind of interdisciplinary currency in university humanities departments. For contemporary critical theory—in particular post-structuralist theories, emphasizing the indeterminacy of meaning, and ideological theories, emphasizing the social construction of values—rejects precisely the belief on which the professional apparatus of the university (graduate exams, dissertation defenses, tenure review, publication in refereed journals, and so forth) depends: the belief that the pursuit of knowledge is a disinterested activity whose results can be evaluated objectively by other trained specialists in one's field. "What's really going on" in the production of knowledge is now regarded, by these new theoretical lights, as not a disinterested enterprise at all but an effort to make the views of a particular class of people prevail.

This rejection of the positivistic model of knowledge production has helped to turn the system of professional rewards, always an arena for academic politics, into an arena for real-world politics as well. Critical theorists whose work attacks the traditional premises of scholarship are invited into humanities departments for the good marketing reason that their work is where the action is today: Every graduate program wants a prominent profile. But the system whose principles those professors teach one another to regard with skepticism remains, except that it has been thoroughly corrupted. It is now regarded as legitimate by some professors to argue that the absence of a political intention or a multicultural focus in another professor's work constitutes a prima facie disqualification for professional advancement. And why not, if all scholarship is at bottom political anyway?

Finally, there has been a change in the role of college in the preparation of young people for careers outside the academy. Although the number of bachelor's degrees awarded each year has been increasing steadily—by 28 percent between 1970 and 1989—the number of professional degrees has been increasing at a much greater rate. The material value of a B.A. is a function of supply: The greater the number of people who have one, the less a B.A. is worth in the marketplace. Particularly for students interested in "being very well-off financially" (74 percent, according to the American Council on Education survey), it has now become imperative not to stop with the B.A. but to proceed to professional school; and the number of M.B.A.'s awarded between 1970 and 1989 therefore increased by 239 percent, the number of M.D.'s by 88 percent, the number of law degrees by 143 percent. Increases in advanced degrees in architecture, engineering, and a number of other nonacademic professional fields were similarly dramatic.

This wave of professionalism has transformed the experience of college. The academic demands on undergraduates are in a sense now more real, since good grades are essential for getting over the hurdle to the next degree program; but the content is somehow less real, since most students now perceive that the education that matters to them will take place after college is finished. This helps to explain the phenomenon of the undergraduate whiz in Foucauldian analysis who goes merrily on to a career in corporate finance.

These various challenges to the established design of higher education present difficulties that have little to do with politics. Perhaps the university will find a way to muddle through them, but muddling alone is not likely

o be very effective. For it is not only a philosophical idea about education hat is being thrown into doubt by these recent developments. It is also the nstitutional structure of the university itself.

I happen to think, for example—and without putting any political valuation on the judgment—that contemporary theoretical skepticism about he positivistic nature of "knowledge" in fields like literature is perfectly justified. It is absurd to treat literary criticism as a species of scientific inquiry; he professional system of rewards in the humanistic disciplines is essentially ogus and leads mostly to intellectual conformity, predictable "demonstrations" of theoretical points, and a panicky desire to please one's elders and superiors. But what university is about to tear down the bureaucratic system of professional advancement in the humanities? How would departments administer themselves without the fiction that they were engaged in the production of real knowledge about real specialities?

Similarly, the undergraduate major seems to me an institution that is at best pedagogically inefficient (why should students going on to law school have to pass a course of what amounts to pre-professional training for graduate school in English or some other academic discipline?) and at worst a contributor to the perpetuation of a fundamentally arbitrary definition of knowledge. The modern academic discipline is only as old as the modern university: Before the 1880s, no one imagined that history, political science, economics, anthropology, and sociology constituted distinct areas of study, each with its own theoretical and methodological traditions. Nor was it imagined by most people that "literature" was a discriminable area of human endeavor that must be talked about exclusively in literary-critical (as opposed to sociological or ethical or theological) terms.

But these distinctions have become institutionalized in the form of academic departments; the people who work in those departments have professionalized themselves to keep out "unqualified" practitioners; and the professions run the fields, monopolizing both instruction and scholarship. It seems to me that a college student today might want, in four years, to acquire knowledge about American culture, about American politics and law, and about capitalism. What a student who bothers to seek out knowledge in these areas is likely to get are courses introducing him or her to the academic specialities of American studies, political science, and economics. Though there is no reason why every undergraduate should not receive it, a practical introduction to the law or to business must usually wait until law school or business school, since that is where the specialists are. Because there are no instructors who are not certified members of an academic discipline, there is very little genuinely general education going on in American colleges.



These problems are severe enough, but they don't explain completely why the university is in such a bad way right now. Questions about educational philosophy must eventually have educational answers; the contemporary university, though, has reached beyond the purview of education, and it has thereby become entangled in problems it lacks the means to resolve. Universities can decide the things people ought to know, and they can decide how those things should be taught. But universities cannot arbitrate disputes about democracy and social justice, or govern the manner in which people relate socially to one another, or police attitudes; and that is what they are being asked to do today.

To some extent this overreaching is the fault of the society as a whole, which is happy to turn over to educators problems it lacks the will (and it believes, the means) to address politically. It is easier to integrate a reading

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list, or even a dormitory, than it is to integrate a suburban neighborhood. But to some extent it is the consequence of the university's own indiscriminate appetite, whose history begins in the 1960s.

The contention that the current problems in the academy are the natural outcome of Sixties radicalism is common to many of the recent attacks on higher education—it can be found in Bloom's, Kimball's, and D'Souza's books. I think the claim is basically false, and that (as Camille Paglia argued in a long diatribe on the subject last spring in the journal *Arion*) the humorless ethos of the politically correct humanities department could not be more antithetical to the spirit of the 1960s. Even the most callow radicalism of that era has nothing to do with the sort of doctrinaire political attitudes critics of the contemporary academy complain about. Are the people who are so eager to censor "fighting words" on campus today the same people who went around in 1968 calling anyone wearing a uniform or a necktie a "pig"? If they are the same people, they've left their radicalism behind.

There is one thing, however, that the present situation does owe to the 1960s, and that is the belief that the university is a miniature reproduction of the society as a whole. That idea dominates, for example, the Port Huron Statement, the manifesto of the New Left drafted by Tom Hayden and endorsed by the Students for a Democratic Society in 1962. But it is not only a leftist idea; for the postwar university has always been eager to incorporate every new intellectual and cultural development that has come its way.

The university is, in fact, expressly designed to do this: It can accommodate almost any interest by creating a new course, a new program, a new studies center. It has managed, for instance, to institutionalize activities like painting and creative writing, not traditionally thought to require academic preparation, by devising M.F.A. programs—which, in turn, provide a place on university faculties for practicing painters and writers. When new scholarly movements emerged—Third World Studies, Women's Studies—the university was quick to establish research centers and institutes to house them. Degrees are now offered in almost everything. There are few intellectual activities left that do not have an academic incarnation.



The problems begin when this process of absorption extends beyond the intellectual realm. In the late 1960s, serious attention began to be paid by university administrators to the quality of campus life. This, too, was in part a response to student protest: Everyone agreed, for example, that one of the lessons of the crisis that led to the shutdown of Columbia in 1968 was that the college had to become less like a corporation and more like a community. But it was also natural that, as higher education became accessible to (and desired by) a greater variety of people in the postwar boom years, the university would evolve in this direction of its own accord.

This development of the university as a social microcosm has been guided in most places by the view (which originated with the students themselves) that there should be available within the walls of the academy the full range of experiences available (or ideally available) outside. The initial breakthrough was a purely middle-class phenomenon: the liberalization of parietal restrictions. (In the late 1960s, to give an idea of the magnitude of the change that has taken place, a student at Barnard, a sophisticated school in a sophisticated city, was expelled for sharing an apartment with her boyfriend *off campus*.) The eventual abandonment of regulations governing relations between the sexes was followed by the sexual integration of many traditionally single-sex schools (Princeton, Yale, Dartmouth, Vassar), and by the recruitment of ethnic minorities in the interest (among other things) of social diversity on campus.

This enormous and successful engulfment of intellectual and social vari
, coming on top of the shocks to the system's *academic* identity, is what
s given the university its present headache. The university has become,
last, too many things to too many people. It now reproduces all the con
cts of the culture at large; but it reproduces them, as it were, in vitro. For
like the society it simulates, the university is unequipped, both admin-
ratively and philosophically, to deal with conflicts that cannot be treat
simply as conflicts of ideas. It has the machinery needed to arbitrate the
rts of disagreements that arise naturally in the pursuit of the university's
ıditional educational goals; but it is not designed to arbitrate among an-
gonistic interest groups, or to discover ways of correcting inequities and
itudes that persist in the society as a whole.

The reason is that the university is required, by its accommodationist phi-
sophy, to give equal protection to every idea and point of view anyone
ooses to express. This is, of course, an indispensable principle of intellectual
:edom. But when the issue is political, when it involves the distribution
power, accommodationism fails. For power is a zero-sum game. In the re-
world, interest groups vie against one another for resources in the knowl-
ge that one group gains by taking from other groups. Political and legal
stitutions exist to mediate these struggles.

In the university, though, no one has ever needed to cede ground to
meone else, since conflict has always been avoided by expanding the
ıying field. But this strategy doesn't work when the stakes are not simply
tellectual. As long as the activities of the Gay Student Alliance and the
ble Study Group remain merely academic, they can coexist. Once those
oups become versions of their real-world counterparts—once they be-
ıme actively political—there is no way to keep both of them happy. But
ıo in the university wants to have to choose between them? In the
ınacademic world, pluralism means a continual struggle over the distribution
a single pie. In the academic world (and the Democratic Party), it means
ying to give every group a pie of its own.

Yet somehow it is expected that, once they are relocated to a campus, dif-
rences that have proved intractable elsewhere will be overcome, both in
ıe classroom and in the student union. This insistence, on the part of
:ademics and nonacademics alike, on making higher education the site for
ɔlitical and social disputes of all types, and on regarding the improvement
social relations and the mediation of political differences as one of high-
education's proper functions, has produced ridiculous distortions. Thus
e have a debate, for example, in which the economic rights of women are
gued about in terms of reading lists for introductory literature courses—
though devoting fewer class hours to male authors might be counted a blow
gainst discrimination in the workplace. And outside the classroom, in the
ɔrms and the dean's office, the university has managed to become a labo-
ıtory for the study and cure of social problems like date rape.

There are as well the notorious speech codes and disciplinary procedures
med at enforcing campus "civility." These are mostly the results of hasty
:tempts to jury-rig disciplinary systems whose need had not been felt un-
l it became commonly assumed that how students addressed one another
as a matter college administrators ought be concerned about. That the pres-
lent of the university should have become the leading figure and spokesper-
ɔn in the incident in which a Brown undergraduate was expelled for
runkenly shouting insults at no one in particular is an indication not on-
/ that the university doesn't know how seriously it is supposed to be tak-
ıg these sorts of "problems" but that it has no appropriate administrative
pparatus for dealing with them either.

And there is, to take a final example, the notion—much less prevalent
han the critics of political correctness claim, but present nonetheless—that
he undergraduate curriculum should include courses whose purpose is, in
ffect, to cheerlead for civil and sexual rights. There is no doubt that many
ivil and sexual rights remain to be secured in this country; there is no

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NURTURE AND PROTECTION

doubt that scandalous inequities persist unattended to. But English profes-
sors are not experts on these matters. They are taught how to identif
tropes, not how to eliminate racist attitudes. To turn their courses int
classes on (say) Post-Colonial Literature with the idea of addressing wit
some degree of insight the problem of ethnocentrism is to ask someon
equipped to catch butterflies to trap an elephant.

This is done, usually, by pretending the butterfly *is* an elephant—b
loading up a poem with so much ideological baggage that it can pass for a
instrument of oppression. Poems won't bear the weight; most works of lit
erature are designed to deflect exactly this kind of attention and to confut
efforts to assign them specific political force. If literature is taught honest
ly from an ideological perspective—if what a book seems to say about th
relations of power among people is made the focus of classroom discus
sion—students are just being led around the mulberry bush. It's not that th
spirit of great literature is being dishonored, for literature can surely b
talked about ideologically; it's that a false impression is being created amon
students that unhappiness whose amelioration lies in real-world political ac
tions is being meaningfully addressed by classroom debates about the rep
resentation of the Other in the work of Herman Melville.

Professors should not be regarded as the people in possession of the "cor
rect" views on subjects of public concern. But the idea that they ought to
be has become an illusion shared by academics and their critics alike. When
George Will wrote last spring, in *Newsweek*, that the task faced by Secre
tary of Defense Dick Cheney was less urgent than the one confronting hi
wife, Lynne, who is the director of the National Endowment for the Hu
manities, he sounded clearly the note of hysteria that has come to dominate
debate about higher education in America. Mrs. Cheney, Will suggested, "i
secretary of domestic defense. The foreign adversaries her husband, Dick
must keep at bay are less dangerous, in the long run, than the domestic forces
with which she must deal. Those forces are fighting against the conserva-
tion of the common culture that is the nation's social cement."

This is witch-hunt talk; but it repeats an error found in less partisan writ-
ings as well, which is that the care of "the common culture" is the re-
sponsibility of college professors. Professors are people trained to *study*
culture, not to *conserve* it (whatever that would mean). Their purview is
limited by the kind of work, always highly specialized and narrowly defined,
professionals in their disciplines have traditionally done. It is no favor to
these people to regard them as the guardians of our culture or as experts on
ministering to its self-inflicted wounds. Nor is it a favor to
the culture to hand it over to academics for its nourish-
ment and protection.

Social and political controversies have swamped the academy for two
reasons: because universities, unwilling to define their mission in specific terms
and eager to accommodate everything that comes along, could not find a
rationale for keeping those controversies at bay; and because there has been
so little serious intellectual debate in the rest of American society in the last
ten years. There have been no real ideas argued in American politics, for in-
stance, since Ronald Reagan showed that ideas were overrated. And intel-
lectual journalism has become dominated by position-taking—the
point-counterpoint syndrome, which permits just two points of view to ev-
ery pre-packaged "issue."

It is almost certain that one of the effects of the public scrutiny of what
professors do will be to turn the academy into another bastion of intellec-
tual predictability. I'm not sure that hasn't happened already. But if not, the
only way to prevent it is for the university to renounce the role of model
community and arbiter of social disputes that it has assumed, to ignore the
impulse to regulate attitudes and expressions that are the epiphenomena of
problems far outside the college walls, to stop trying to set up academic hous-
ing for every intellectual and political interest group that comes along, and
to restrict itself to the business of imparting some knowledge to the people
who need it. ■

WHAT CAMPUS RADICALS?

The P. C. undergrad is a useful specter

By Rosa Ehrenreich

A national survey of college administrators released last summer found that "political correctness" is not the campus issue it has been portrayed to be by pundits and politicians of the political right. During the 1990–91 academic year, according to the survey's findings, faculty members complained of pressure from students and fellow professors to alter the political and cultural content of their courses at only 5 *percent* of all colleges. So much for the influence of the radicals, tenured or otherwise.

The survey's findings came as no real surprise to me. The hegemony of the "politically correct" is not a problem at Harvard, where I've just completed my undergraduate education, or at any other campus I visited during my student years. But then none among those who have escalated the P.C. debate in the past year—Dinesh D'Souza and Roger Kimball, George Will and George Bush, *Time* and *New York* magazines—is actually interested in what is happening on the campuses. In all the articles and op-ed pieces published on P.C., multiculturalism, etc., very few student voices have been heard. To be a liberal arts student with progressive politics today is at once to be at the center of a raging national debate and to be completely on the sidelines, watching others far from campus describe you and use you for their own ends.

For instance: During the spring semester of my freshman year at Harvard, Stephan Thernstrom, an American history professor, was criticized by several black students for making "racially insensitive" comments during lectures. The incident made the *Harvard Crimson* for a few days, then blew over after a week or so and was quickly forgotten by most students. It continued a kind of mythic afterlife, however, in the P.C. debate. Here is how it was described last January in a *New York* magazine cover story by John Taylor on, in the author's words, the "moonies in the classroom" propagating the "new fundamentalism":

> "Racist." "Racist!" "The man is a racist [illegible] *racist!*"
>
> Such denunciations, hissed in tones of self-righteousness and contempt, vicious and vengeful, furious, smoking with hatred—such denunciations haunted Stephan Thernstrom for weeks. Whenever he walked through the campus that spring, down Harvard's brick paths, under the arched g[illegible] past the fluttering elms, he found it hard not to imagine the pointing fingers, the whispers.

The operative word here is "imagine." Taylor seriously distorted what actually happened. In February of 1988, several black female students told classmates that they had been disturbed by some "racially insensitive" comments made by Professor Thernstrom. Thernstrom, they said, had spoken approvingly of Jim Crow laws, and had said that black men, harboring feelings of inferiority, beat their female partners. The students, fearing for their grades should they anger Professor Thernstrom by confronting him with their criticisms—this is not an unusual way for college students to think things through, as anyone who's been an undergraduate well knows—never discussed the matter with him. They told friends, who told friends, and the *Crim-*

Rosa Ehrenreich was graduated from Harvard University last spring. She is now a Marshall Scholar at Oxford.

[illegible] picked up word of the incident and ran an article.

Professor Thernstrom, understandably disturbed to learn of the matter in the *Crimson*, wrote a letter protesting that no students had ever approached him directly with such criticisms. He also complained that the students' vague criticisms about "racial insensitivity" had "launched a witch-hunt" that would have "chilling effect[s] upon freedom of expression." Suddenly, Professor Thernstrom was to be understood as a victim, falsely smeared with the charge of racism. But no one had ever accused him of any such thing. "I do not charge that [Thernstrom] is a racist," Wendi Grantham, one of the students who criticized Thernstrom, wrote to the *Crimson* in response to his letter. Grantham believed the professor gave "an incomplete and over-simplistic presentation of the information....I am not judging [his] character; I am simply asking questions about his presentation of the material..." As for the professor's comment that the criticisms were like a "witch-hunt," Grantham protested that Thernstrom had "turned the whole situation full circle, proclaimed himself victim, and resorted to childish name-calling and irrational comparisons...'witch-hunt' [is] more than a little extreme..." But vehement, even hysterical language is more and more used to demonize students who question and comment. Terms like "authoritarian" and "Hitler youth" have been hurled at students who, like Grantham, dare to express any sort of criticism of the classroom status quo.

I GOT THROUGH THIRTY-TWO COURSES AT HARVARD WITHOUT EVER BEING REQUIRED TO READ A WORK BY A BLACK WOMAN WRITER

In my four years as a student at Harvard, I found few signs of a new fascism of the left. For that matter, there are few signs of the left at all. The Harvard-Radcliffe Democratic Socialists Club collapsed due to lack of members, as did the left-wing newspaper, the *Subterranean Review*. As to the neoconservative charge that the traditional political left has been supplanted by a feminist-gay-multicultural left: In my senior year the African-American Studies department and the Women's Studies committee each had so few faculty that the same woman served as chair of both. I got through thirty-two courses at Harvard, majoring in the history and literature of England and America, without ever being required to read a work by a black woman writer, and of my thirty-two professors only two were women. I never even *saw* a black or Hispanic professor. (Fewer than 10 percent of tenured professors at Harvard are women, and fewer than [illegible] percent are members of minorities.)

Perhaps, as some conservatives have maintained, even a few radical professors can reach hundreds of students, bending their minds and sending them, angry and politicized, out into society upon graduation. To cure such fears, drop by Harvard's Office of Career Services. Most staffers there spend their days advising those who would be corporate execs, financial consultants, and investment bankers. Nearly 20 percent of the class of 1990 planned to go to law school. This compares with 10 percent who claimed that they would eventually go into government or one of what Career Services calls the "helping professions."

President Bush, speaking at the University of Michigan's commencement exercises last spring, went on about radical extremists on campus. It would be interesting to know how he calculated this rise in radicalism. Two thirds of Harvard students wholeheartedly supported the Gulf War, according to one *Crimson* poll. That's more support for the war than was found in the country at large. And during my years at Harvard I found that most women on campus, including those who consider themselves politically liberal, would not willingly identify themselves as feminists.

The very notion of "politicization" makes most Harvard students nervous. I discovered this in the fall of 1989, when I was elected president of Harvard's community service organization, Phillips Brooks House Association. I had been reckless enough to suggest that volunteers would benefit from having some awareness of the social and political issues that affected the communities in which they did their volunteer work. I was promptly attacked in the *Crimson* for trying to inappropriately "politicize" public service. The paper also suggested that under my leadership volunteer training might mimic a "party line," with Brooks House as a "central planning office." This used to be called red-baiting. (So much for the liberal campus media.)

Meanwhile—and unremarked upon by D'Souza, et al.—the campus right thrives nationally. Two new right-wing vehicles have popped up on Harvard's campus in recent years. The Association Against Learning in the Absence of Religion and Morality (AALARM) initially made a splash with its uninhibited gay-bashing. The magazine *Peninsula*, closely tied to AALARM, bears an uncanny editorial resemblance to the notorious *Dartmouth Review*, claims to uphold Truth, and has a bizarre propensity for centerfold spreads of mangled fetuses. And older, more traditional conservative groups have grown stronger and more ideological. The Harvard Republican Club, once a stodgy and

elatively inactive group, suffered a rash of purges nd resignations as more moderate members were riven out by the far right. It is inactive no more.

There *are* those on the left who are intolerant nd who could stand to lighten up a bit—these re the activists whom *progressive* and *liberal* stu ents mockingly called "politically correct" years efore the right appropriated the term, with a typ cal lack of irony. But on the hole, intolerance at Har ard—and, I suspect, else where—is the province nostly of extreme conser atism. Posters put up at Har ard by the Bisexual, Gay and esbian Students Association re routinely torn down. I lon't recall any Republican Club posters being ripped up r removed.

The day after the bombing tarted in Iraq, I went to an vent advertised as "a non partisan rally to support our roops," sponsored by the Re publican Club. After the cheduled speakers—and sev eral other non-scheduled speakers—had finished, I ried to speak. The rally or ganizers promptly turned off the microphone. I kept speak ing, saying that I supported the troops but not the war. I added that I had been dis turbed to hear it said by rally organizers—and applauded by the audience—that the time for debate was over. In a democracy, I said, the time for debate is never over.

I would have gone on, but at this point a group of men in the audience felt the need to demonstrate their convic tion that there should be no debate. They began to loud ly chant "victory" over and over, quite effec tively drowning me out. By way of contrast, supporters of the war were listened to in polite silence by the crowd at an anti-war rally the next day.



In the classroom, too, right-wing political views are heard without disruption. One of Harvard's largest core courses, taken by nearly half of all undergraduates while I was there, is Social Analysis 10, Principles of Economics. It was taught, during my undergrad years, by two of President Reagan's top economic advisers, Martin Feldstein and Larry Lindsay. Students did not rise up *en masse* to protest the course's right-wing political bias; instead, they sat scribbling feverishly in their notebooks: Ec-10 had a notoriously steep grading curve. (No one seemed worried that each year some 750 innocent Harvard students were being lectured to by the engineers of what George Bush, in one of his more forthright moments, once referred to as "voodoo economics.")

There are many other politically conservative professors at Harvard whose courses are quite popular—Richard Pipes on Russian history and Samuel P. Huntington on modern democracy, to name two of the most prominent—and in their classrooms, as in all undergrad classrooms I was in, free and open discussion did quite well. I took many classes in which fearless conservatives rushed to take part in entirely civil discussions about the efficacy and justice of affirmative action, about whether books like *Uncle Tom's*

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bin and Frederick Douglass's autobiography "really *literature*," as opposed to just interest historical documents, and about whether it's all fair or even interesting to condemn Jeffer for owning slaves even as he decried slavery. ese are all valid questions, and all sides deserve earing—which, in my experience, is exactly at they always got.

And my experience was not unique. Most oth- Harvard students seemed to agree that there's such thing as a cadre of P.C. thought police. st winter the Republican Club laid huge sheets poster board across several dining-hall tables d put up a sign asking students to scribble wn their responses to the question "Is there free eech at Harvard?" The vast majority of stu- nts wrote things like "What's the big deal? Of urse there's free speech here." And the lively, eerful discussion going on among the students gathered around the tables attested to that fact.

Conservatives like D'Souza and Kimball arge that traditional Western culture courses rely exist anymore at schools like Harvard, cause of some mysterious combination of stu- nt pressure and the multiculturalist, post-struc- ralist tendencies of radical professors. Writing the *Atlantic Monthly* last year, Caleb Nelson, former editor of the conservative *Harvard dient*, complained that in the 1989–90 Harvard urse catalogue:

> No core Literature and Arts course lists any of the great nineteenth-century British novelists among the authors studied, nor does any list such writers as Virgil, Milton, and Dostoevsky. In the core's history areas even students who... took every single course would not focus on any Western history before the Middle Ages, nor would they study the history of the Enlightenment, the Renaissance, the American Civil War, or a host of other topics that one might expect a core to cover.

Nelson's major complaint is that Harvard is not roperly educating all of its students. I agree with im here; in Caleb Nelson, Harvard has let us all lown by producing a student so poorly educated hat he's unable even to read the course catalogue.

I have the 1989–90 catalogue in front of me is I write, and a quick sampling of some of the ntries gives us, from the Literature and Arts nd the Historical Study sections of the core urriculum, the following courses: Chaucer, Shakespeare, The Bible and Its Interpreters, Classical Greek Literature and 5th-Century Athens, The Rome of Augustus, The British Empire, The Crusades, The Protestant Reformation. Perhaps Chaucer and Shakespeare are somehow, to Caleb Nelson, not "such writers" as Milton and Dostoevsky and the Protestant Reformation is a historically trivial topic.

Nelson also worries that students will have "no broad look at... philosophy" [illegible] ally means Western philosophy. Yet in the Moral Reasoning section of the core, seven of the ten courses listed have at least four of the following authors on their primary reading lists: Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Machiavelli, Locke, Kant, Rousseau, Hume, Mill, Nietzsche, Marx, and Weber. There is one course devoted to a non Western philosopher: Confucius. The remaining two Moral Reasoning courses focus, respectively, on the writings of "Aristotle...[and] Maimonides," and of "Jesus as presented in the Gospels."

These courses are far more representative of those taken by most Harvard undergraduates than the titillating and much denounced 1991 English course on Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety—a graduate seminar listed in the course catalogue but ultimately never held. But then, if you are a right-winger looking for something to replace the commies on campus—remember them?—you aren't going to sell books or raise funds or win votes complaining about undergrads studying Confucian Humanism and Moral Community.

Many of the loudest complainers about P.C. thought police are those who are doing their best to curb free expression in other areas. It doesn't appear to bother Dinesh D'Souza that the word "abortion" cannot be uttered at a federally funded family clinic. More broadly, the brouhaha about political conformity on campus serves as a perfect smoke screen, masking from Americans—from ourselves—the rigid political conformity *off* campus: the blandness of our political discourse, the chronic silence in Washington on domestic matters, the same faces returned to office each year, the bipartisanship that keeps problems from becoming issues. During the Gulf War, the number of huge yellow bouquets in public places rivaled the number of larger-than-life photos of Saddam Hussein displayed on Iraqi billboards. Patriotically correct.

The campuses are no more under siege by radicals than is the society at large. It has been clever of the Kimballs and D'Souzas to write as if it were so. It is always clever of those in ascendance to masquerade as victims. Rebecca Walkowitz, the newly elected president of the *Harvard Crimson*, understands perfectly how this dynamic works. Referring to the 1988 incident involving Professor Thernstrom and several of his black students, Walkowitz has said: "People call the *Crimson* and ask what we 'did to that man.' It's important to remember who has the power here, because it's not students. Who would dare criticize a professor for political reasons now? In addition to fearing for your grade, you'd fear being pilloried in the national press." ■

BEGGARING OUR BETTER SELVES

The tug of the outstretched hand, day after day

By Lynne Sharon Schwartz

Hark, hark, the dogs do bark! The beggars are coming to town…

—Mother Goose

A family legend: New York, the Bowery, early 1950s, a man comes up to my father and asks for money for something to eat. What most Bowery beggars really want is a drink, my father knows. But food is healthier. "You're hungry? Okay, come on, I'll buy you lunch." And he does.

The story was meant to be touching—how generous my father was with time, money, wisdom—and for a long time I found it so. I could hear my father's voice, like the snapping of a finger—"Come on, I'll buy you lunch"—and picture the swift, peremptory jerk of his head in the direction of the nearest restaurant, a simple but decent place. How gallantly he led the beggar to a table, appropriating two illustrated menus coated in plastic and handing him one. "Anything you like," he would say rather grandly. Did the beggar order a substantial meal, steaming pot roast nestled in simmered carrots and onions, or something more austere, like an egg salad sandwich?

Knowing my father, I assumed they did not eat in silence. Did he use the opportunity to expound on his political views, making provocative statements, raising his voice and blood pressure? And was the beggar gregarious, eager to tell his tale of adversity, or taciturn, paying for the meal with his only abundant possession, his endurance?

Did my father finally dab suavely at his mustache, toss down his napkin, and extend his hand for a gentlemanly parting? And how did the beggar respond to that? Alas, the story was never told as I would have liked to hear it, with each nuance of gesture and dialogue, setting and timing, the shifting underpinnings of emotion and small stirrings of heart and mind as revealed in the face and voice, all of which, to me, *were* the story, as opposed to the bare events. Still, it was a good story, despite its ambiguities.

Until many years later, that is, when I told it to my friend A. She was aghast. My father's act showed the worst kind of condescension, she informed me heatedly. Giving was his free choice, but how to spend the gift was the beggar's choice. Otherwise giving is an abuse of power. An ego trip.

A. had a good case, and I was downcast, my moment of nostalgia ruined. Yet wasn't my father's behavior valid in his life and times? His own scramble for success proved that he knew how to go about things; doing good, by his lights, was scattering abroad his earned knowledge. How could I scorn him when I myself would not have given my time to an unappealing stranger? True, A. might have done it. She would have taken him to a bar, I thought bitterly.

Long after my father's episode, I happened to see, from a third-floor window, another lunch given away on the Bowery. A raggedy grizzled man shuffled northward across Delancey Street. A young black woman wearing shorts and a halter and biting into a frankfurter crossed in the opposite direction. When they met, he held out his hand, palm up. Barely breaking stride—for the light was changing and four lanes of impatient traffic would instantly engulf them—she handed him the half-eaten frankfurter. Between the north and south corners of Delancey Street the frankfurter passed from one pair of lips to another, as the milk from Rose of Sharon's breast passed to the lips of the dying man in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Now, of course, our streets are so thick with beggars that people of my father's virtuous persuasion could take a beggar to lunch every day, ten times a day, incensing the politically correct. Or, in keeping with "lite" aesthetics, they might follow B.'s strategy: Overcome by the clamor of the hungry, she has begun fixing daily packets of sandwiches—whatever she herself is having for lunch—and hands out the neat tinfoil squares to whoever asks. "What's in it today?" one of her regulars inquired. "Peanut butter and jelly." He scowled, hesitated, but in the end accepted it indulgently, as if *she* were the beggar, asking to be relieved of the burden of good fortune.

Indeed, social roles have become so fluid that askers and givers change places with the agility of partners at a square dance. As the numbers of beggars increased, C., like B., came to

Lynne Sharon Schwartz's latest novel is Leaving Brooklyn. *Her translation from the Italian of* Luisa Mallis Smoke Over Birkenau *received the 1991 PEN Renato Poggioli Award.*

bathe the impotence of his assigned ole. No more awkward doling out of ittle coins, he decided. He would give significant sum every couple of weeks, ke paying a bill, a sum that might take a real, if temporary, difference in beggar's life. No class-bound judgments either: He wouldn't choose the pparently deserving or speculate on ow the money might be spent. A gratuitous act, a declaration of freedom om the conventional etiquette of begardom. The first time he tried it, the eggar looked at the bill handed o him, then up at C. "But this is wenty dollars." "Yes, I know," aid C. "Hey, this is terrific! Come on, I'll take you to lunch."

Some hold that begging is a ob, not one which anyone would aspire to but which a hare of the population regularly does, through family tradition, ack of drive or opportunity, possibly even natural talent. George Orwell puts it best in *Down and Out in Paris and London:*

> There is no *essential* difference between a beggar's livelihood and that of numberless respectable people. Beggars do not work, it is said; but then, what is *work?* A navvy works by swinging a pick. An accountant works by adding up figures. A beggar works by standing out of doors in all weathers and getting varicose veins, chronic bronchitis, etc. It is a trade like any other; quite useless, of course—but, then, many reputable trades are quite useless...A beggar...has not, more than most modern people, sold his honour; he has merely made the mistake of choosing a trade at which it is impossible to grow rich.

But in the United States begging evokes too much shock and horror ever to be accepted as a career. The pursuit of happiness works as a command as well as a right, and part of the pursuit is ambition, labor, sweat. Then there is the famous liberal guilt at being privileged in a supposedly classless society. Above all, our horror is attached to a certain pride: We are enlightened enough to be horrified at beggary, if not enough to do anything significant about it.

Before the First World War, according to my mother's sentimental stories, hoboes turning up on her parents' doorstep were given lunch in exchange for sweeping the yard or hauling the garbage—a fairly clear and guilt-free transaction compared with begging and giving. These days few city people are at home to offer lunch—they're out doing what Orwell so disparagingly calls "work"—while those who are would hardly open their doors to a stranger.

Today's beggars baffle us. Unlike



the working poor, they haven't always been with us, not lining the streets, at any rate, in such a vast and variegated array: from bedraggled to shabbily decent to casually hip; sick or drugged-out to robust; pathetic to friendly to arrogant.

To confuse matters further, not all beggars see their situation in an Orwellian light, as my friend D.'s experience illustrates. The opposite of shy, D. can say with impunity virtually anything to anybody. She marches up to the regular on her street corner and asks, "Look here, why can't a healthy, strapping young man like you get a job?" He talks about the sad state of the job market, how demoralizing it is to be turned away. "Look here," says D., undaunted, very much like my father in her certainty of what is right, "we've all had some bad luck with jobs. You've got to get back in there and keep trying." So the conversation goes. And, as in my father's time, enduring it is how the beggar earns his

[illegible] What he's [illegible] enough [illegible] for the money, he says, "Look [illegible] I'll decide when the [illegible] over."

The beggar is a keen social index of our state of affairs: Who we are is revealed from response. We range from openhanded A., who sets forth staunchly with a pocketful of change and gives democratically to all—"If they're desperate enough to ask . . ."—to otherwise kindly Z., who never gives because she suspects every beggar is making a fool of her. To give, she feels, is to be taken.

In themselves, A. and Z. do not represent extremes of generosity and meanness, wealth and poverty, or political left and right. A. may have more money, but Z. is far from penury. Nor is she stingy and insensitive; a therapist working in a social agency, she gives at the office, as it were. What can be read from their actions is their degree of suspicion of the world and safety in it, their reflexive response to the unexpected and unwelcome. Maybe their whole psychic structure could be discovered, had we enough data.

On my way to the supermarket recently I saw a familiar beggar approach—a tall, slender, woebegone man with watery eyes, graying hair, and neat gray clothes, whose beat was slightly to the south. Immediately came the usual and wearisome chain of thoughts. Do I have any change on me? Do I feel like it today? How am I today anyway, that is, how firm is my place in the world?—a question usually reserved for the murky insomniac hours. The unsettling thing about beggars is that, unless one has a very thick skin or, like A. and Z., a strict policy, their presence compels such questions many times a day. Like public clocks that drive compulsives to check their watches, beggars make us check our inner dials of plenitude or neediness, well-being or instability. The readings determine whether and what we give.

In the midst of my reckonings, the man passed me by without even an acknowledgment. Imagine! I was just another face in the crowd. He wasn't soliciting because he wasn't yet at

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work. Why assume begging is a twenty-four-hour-a-day job any more than plumbing or typing? Any more an identity than grocer or engineer? Maybe I assume it because quite a few beggars in mufti—spiffy, sprightly—stroll past with such a gracious good morning that I'm moved to answer in kind. Then, with my attention snagged, comes the touch, a mutual joke at my expense: Ha, ha, and you thought I was only being friendly.

Some in rags, and some in tags. And one in a velvet gown.

It didn't begin, this age of beggary, on an appointed day, the way Errol Flynn in an old movie announced with a flourish of his sword the opening thrust of the Thirty Years' War, but sneaked up some seven or eight years ago, just as the cult of money was enjoying a passionate revival. At first people were appalled. Not here; this wasn't Calcutta, after all. There was sympathy, naturally. We stared uneasily, clucked somberly, catalogued: young, old, black, white, male, female. Sickly and strong. Addicts? Hard to tell. In rags and tags and velvet gowns.

There was curiosity, too. The beggars offered a new genre of performance art amid other lively street phenomena, and we the audience compared offerings, whipped up impromptu reviews around our dinner tables. As with any art form, early samples ranged from the banal—I'm not really a beggar but an unemployed carpenter with five hungry children—to the memorable—pardon my odor but I have no place to take a shower like you folks. Successful beggars, like successful stand-up comics, must display uniqueness of personality in a few swift, arresting strokes. Their stories require a certain narrative flair. Verisimilitude aside, we treasure sheer inventiveness.

A justly renowned beggar works the rowdy nocturnal subway cars returning from New York's Shea Stadium during the baseball season. He enters ominously, carrying a tarnished trumpet blotched with holes. He brings it to his lips; the sound that emerges is a Dantean assault. The passengers blink and shudder, like romping children startled by an ogre. At last he mercifully lowers the trumpet and announces genially, "I'm not going to stop till you folks give m some money." A tense moment? N at all. The crowd laughs, and gives. good-humored crowd, they've pai for their tickets and beer and h dogs and subway ride; they'll she out for peace too, and for a laug It's part of the price of the sportiv outing, a surtax. By some mad urba alchemy it is acceptable to be assail by this grotesque noise and have t pay to make it stop. He plays a fe more measures, goading the recalci trant, then moves on to the next ca to repeat the performance, becom ing part of the legend of the city, splendiferous city full of assaults an of relief, where you pay fo both.

Our reactions followed a pre dictable trajectory. As the initial sur prise wore off along with th entertainment value, as we got used t seeing beggars everywhere (but no for long, surely—whatever politica glitch brought them out would soon b repaired), our interest became more defined. Refined. We found we have *tastes* in beggars as in everything else. E. will not give to those who look young and healthy, for why are they not out hustling for a living as he is? F. always gives to women because they seem more vulnerable, their lot harder to bear than men's. G. gives only outside his immediate neighborhood so as not to encourage beggars to congregate there, while H., careful of her spiritual integrity, will give only out of genuine sympathy, not to get rid of a nuisance. J. will not give to anyone who comes too close: she has strong feelings about her personal "space" being invaded. K. is too afraid to take out her purse on the street: She views beggars and, in fact, all passersby as potential thieves.

L. gives exclusively to those who ask humbly and politely. If he must be solicited and possibly "taken" (shades of Z.), he feels the beggars should at the very least make a pretense of a civil transaction, to save face all around. Anyone claiming his contribution as if by right is out of luck. If L. is not thanked, he will not give again. Sensitive M. prefers not to be thanked. "There but for the grace of God...," she murmurs. She

ill gladly engage in non-grateful partee, though, while N., who also uns gratitude, wants the briefest verbal exchange: He gives willingly but nnot stomach long-winded explaations or autobiography.

Quite unlike O., who must say a w words with his donation and wants few in return; he needs to act out an rdinary exchange between ordinary eople, one of whom happens to be in raitened circumstances. P. went still rther: He made friends with a local eggar, learned his story, occasionally et him for coffee, and introduced im around. Now living elsewhere, P. nquires after him and sends news rough friends.

Q. resists giving when pressured or nanipulated—for instance, when begars act as obsequious doormen at the hreshold of banks, an explicit reminder: You have reason to enter a ank while I do not, and what is a ank but the stony emblem of what istinguishes us? R., too, resists urgent leas but yields to the beggar who vith grinning aplomb requests ten dollars for a steak dinner or five hundred for a trip to Hawaii. An epicure, he waits for a beggar worthy of his attentions, a beggar of kindred, subtle sensibility, an accomplice. Then he can forget the mutual mortification.

With the passage of time, sympathy and selective appreciation slid into frustration. We had given, we were giving, yet the beggars remained rooted to their posts, holding out the everlasting Styrofoam cups. (S., in an expansive mood, dropped a quarter into a Styrofoam cup and coffee splashed forth.) Our tone, when we spoke of them, was somewhat distraught.

So we cast around for reasons to harden our hearts. In all probability, our handouts encouraged the drug trade, crime, and personal degeneration. Shouldn't legitimate beggars avail themselves of social services through official channels? (A Brechtian notion, given the nature of the services.) One way or another, we tempered generosity with righteousness.

Meanwhile the beggars grew intemperate. No more meek charm and [illegible] intricities. Their banter took [illegible] edge. A nagging beggar [illegible] pronounced firmly, "[illegible]k, I'm having a really bad day. I [illegible] me alone." "Oh, I'm sorry," he replied. "Anything I can do?" "No thanks, I'll be okay. Just let me alone." "Well, in that case, how about a dollar and a half for a hamburger?" Caving in, T. fished around and came up with sixty cents. "Here." "But it's not enough," the man said evenly.

Irritation took root. We had given and given, surely enough to expiate our blessings. Now could we have our streets back? As if we needed to give only to a certain point, as we need to give taxes or suffer unto the death. In response the beggars became aggressive—after all, they had been asking for as long as we had been giving. They implored, nagged, demanded. They hounded, pursued, and menaced, accepting small change grudgingly, muttering, even shouting their contempt, a form of blackmail, embarrassing us publicly as if we—we!—were the out-

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FURTHER READINGS

BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO *HARPER'S MAGAZINE* READERS



I Become Part of It: Sacred Dimensions in Native American Life, [illegible] dan-Smith, is an important and accessible contribution to the understanding of American Indian spirituality today. Essays by Arthur Amiotte, Oren Lyons, Joseph Epes Brown, and Barbara Tedlock. "Welcome relief from the flood of pseudo-scholarship cluttering libraries and bookstores . . . impeccable scholarship and valuable insights."—*Library Journal*. 304 pages. Paperback, $14.95. Parabola Books.

The Education of Little Tree, by Forrest Carter. The captivating story of an orphaned Cherokee boy raised by his grandparents, from whom he learns the simple moral ethics of living. Set in the mountains of Tennessee in the 1930s and told through incident, example, personalities, and the changes of the seasons, the book has a spiritual wisdom that is universal. Its phenomenal success can be attributed to word-of-mouth praise from readers who have felt its impact on their lives. Cloth, 228 pages, $16.96 (0–8263–1233–0); paperback, 216 pages, $10.95 (0–8263–0879–1). University of New Mexico Press.

Letters From Togo, by Susan Blake. What happens when a single white woman travels to Togo on a Fulbright? Here, Susan Blake relates her adventure with insightful, entertaining letters, described by Susan Allen Toth as "the kind one's traveling friends ought to write home, but never do." Dea Birkett calls *Letters From Togo* "more than a travel book." As Blake tells her vibrant story, we are drawn in with her into the heart of Togo on an unforgettable journey. 200 pages. Cloth, $25.00; paperback, $12.95. University of Iowa Press.



When I Am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple, [illegible] women, aging women and women who care for them" (*Indianapolis Star*) has become an underground bestseller with more than 325,000 copies in print. "A fine anthology. The poems are clean and tight, the short stories moving and honestly crafted, the photographs perceptive."—*Wilson Library Bulletin*. Winner of the 1991 American Bestsellers Book of the Year Honors Award. 177 pages. Cloth, $16.00; paperback, $10.00. Papier-Mache Press.

The Birth of Popular Culture: Ben Jonson, Maid Marian and Robin Hood, [illegible] ing exploration of the relationship between the profession of author and the evolution of "folk" or "popular" culture. Hayes concentrates on Jonson's unfinished play, *The Sad Shepherd: Or, A Tale Of Robin Hood*, transforming our understanding of both Jonson's works and the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Robin Hood legends. 217 pages. Cloth, $28.95. Duquesne University Press.

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...learn the facts about...

"Land for Peace"

Will it solve the problems of the Middle East?

...much emphasis for years, intensified in recent months, on the "land for ...la to solve the long-simmering problems of the Middle East. Translating this ...nto plain English means that Israel should surrender Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza to the Arabs. They would establish a Palestinian state. Once that happened, it is thought that peace and tranquility would soon come to the troubled Middle East.

What are the facts?

■ The concept of "land for peace" is a totally new one in the history of the world. It was formulated for one specific purpose only, namely to persuade and pressure Israel to give up territories that it has administered since the Six-Day War of 1967. By its victory in that war, Israel wound up in possession of these territories. Contrary to what many are led to believe, the "West Bank," the focus of today's attention, had never been part of any Arab country. It was part of Palestine, a territorial unit that, by the Mandate of the League of Nations and in line with the Balfour Declaration, had been designated as a national home for the Jewish people.

■ Thus, while the concept of "land for peace" is a brand-new one, the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself and had really never been questioned before the days of the Israel-Arab conflict. Our own country, of course, following its Manifest Destiny, has benefited greatly and has consolidated its territory by applying this motto. But Israel followed a different path From the day of victory in 1967, it waited for an offer of peace from the Arabs. But that offer never came. Instead, immediately following the war, the Arabs pronounced their three unalterable "no's:" no recognition, no negotiation, and no peace with Israel.

■ In 1977, President Sadat of Egypt traveled to Jerusalem and presented a peace plan to the Israeli government. The Israelis eagerly embraced his suggestion. In exchange for peace and normalization of relations with its neighbor, Israel returned to Egypt the vast Sinai peninsula, together with the city of Yamit; some of the most advanced military installations in the world; the port and naval installations of Sharm-el-Sheik, which safeguard Israel's access to its port of Eilat; and the oil fields that Israel had developed and which had made Israel self-sufficient in its energy requirements. And, of course, Israel also gave up the natural buffer against aggression that the Suez Canal and the strategic depth of the Sinai itself provided. It was a first in history. Never before in the chronicle of mankind had the victor returned conquered territory to the vanquished in order to attain peace.

■ One would expect that the concept of "land for peace" would work both ways. After all, should not the Arabs also make some territorial sacrifices for peace? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Every inch of land held by the Arabs is considered "holy Arab soil" and its possession by the "infidels" (Christians or Jews) is inadmissible, intolerable, a blasphemy and a case for "jihad" (holy war). No compromise, no concession is ever possible. The way the "Taba issue" was finally resolved further illustrates the Arab belief that the "land for peace" principle is basically a one-way street.

■ The "land for peace" formulation is now applied mostly to the Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza regions. Israel's foes, but also some of its friends, urge Israel to yield these regions to the Arabs, in exchange for "peace." But there is no peace, and no peace will come about by Israel's giving up this area of vital strategic importance to those who are its sworn enemies and who have declared over and over again that they wish to use this land as their launching pad for the final attempt at the destruction of Israel. The conflict in the area is not only between Israel and the "Palestinians." It is first of all between Israel and the Arab nations. With the single exception of Egypt, virtually all of them are still in a state of war with Israel.

To none of the Arab countries has the possibility ever occurred of *their* trading land for peace, for instance yielding the "West Bank" to Israel for the sake of peace. Not one of these countries has even hinted that they would make peace with Israel if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. There isn't even a gesture of accommodation, such as a lifting of the over 40-year-old Arab economic boycott against Israel, an apology for the odious slander that Zionism is Racism, or a discontinuation of the yearly charade in the United Nations, in which the Arab states attempt to expel Israel from that body. For the victor to yield land for peace to the vanquished is a new idea—who knows, it might even be a good one. But it surely would have to work both ways in order to be valid and effective.

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casts. Once I had no bills less than five dollars and gave my only coin, a dime, to a sickly young beggar wrapped in a blanket. "You can keep your ten cents, lady," he shouted through the crowd. Maybe he threw it back at me—I didn't turn to look. It would have cost me less to give him a five.

As I lugged my crammed shopping cart home, I was stopped by the woebegone man who had earlier failed to recognize me. This time my first thought was atavistic—those stories about hoboes sweeping the porch for a hot lunch. If only he would offer to pull my cart home. Yes, by rights he should earn the money with dignity for a change. But this is not 1910: The social contract has altered, along with the connotations of "rights" and "earn" and "dignity." Whatever tasks I might need done were not his concern. If he noticed at all, chances are he resented my cornucopia on wheels. Or perhaps he prized his freedom from the banality of shopping carts, like the hoboes of legend. I gave him some coins and he drifted past and away—to the bar, to McDonald's, the crack dealer, or his hungry family? We were farther apart than my grandmother and her pre-war vagrants, the distance greater with each step: no common life, no basis for business, between us.

Nowadays we want to pick and choose our stimuli. Sealed cars and windows, shopping malls, suburbs, and retirement communities shut out the natural inevitabilities of weather, noise, dirt, and chaos, while the technology of exclusion is hard at work on pain and death. But the beggars simply will not vanish. And when they are truculent and defy our wishes, we sullenly withhold our aid. In turn, when we deny the full measure of their requests, they withhold their gratitude.

In the end the beggars became tiresome, like TV sitcoms. Their plots were always the same, leaning heavily on flashback and ending with the extended cup. We got bored. Soon came boredom's handmaiden: We are indifferent. Yes, a few, like A., still give with a kind of moral fervor. Some try to renovate housing, others work in soup kitchens or hand out used clothing. But no matter what small

orts we make, still the beggars re-
ain. They line the crazed streets, a
rpentine fun-house mirror, con-
anding us, giving us our images *in ev-*
mis, distorting our best instincts,
aggerating our worst.

At jarring moments they reflect us
too well. My friend U.'s street is a
thering place for beggars, among
em a relentless badgerer. In a vin-
ctive mood, she gave a pittance ev-
y few feet but bypassed this least
vorite. He chased after her, yelling,
ley, what about me? I'm a person
o!" A cry from the soul. A univer-
l truth that brought U. to a repen-
nt halt. She turned, her hand already
rrowing in the grit of her pocket, but
ie imploring face, the timbre of his
ea resounding in her ears, sent a
reak of revulsion through her. That
ıdless self-assertion, that merciless
eed: Why, he was a replica of the in-
haustibly demanding husband she
as on the point of leaving. She
heeled around and walked on.

I think all the forms of giving, with
ıeir elaborate rationales, come down
) two modes, the way art can be
rudely divided into classic and ro-
ıantic. We give from a feeling that
ıe beggars are different from us or
ıat they are the same. Social philoso-
her Philip Slater has written that
)ve of others is what we have left
ver when self-love has been satis-
ed. To give from a feeling of plenitude
nd aloofness adds to our self-satis-
ıction. To give out of kinship is the
ıore accurate impulse, though, as well
s the more raw and painful.

I tend to give when feeling least in
ıeed, when the world has provided
ne with my share and maybe more.
When I feel neglected, abused, invis-
ble, unloved, and surly—a bit like a
)eggar myself—I resist. What makes
ou think I'm any different from you?
want to say. That I have anything to
spare, that I don't need help too? Of
course my feelings are irrelevant to
)eggars (though theirs are not irrele-
vant to me, making for a deeper in-
equity and unease). They are not
asking for my existential well-being
but for my spare change, and while
my well-being may vary from day to
day, I always have spare change. I can
afford subtle distinctions. To the beg-
gars, though, money is not metaphor.

Just as slavery imprisons masters as
well as slaves, beggary beggars us. We
are solicited and must solicit in turn,
asking that the performances repre-
sent the world as we wish it to be, so
that our place in it holds steady. We
beg the beggars not to jostle too no-
ticeably the abstractions we have con-
stituted in our heads and imprinted
on the physical matter around us.

Small wonder that beggars are re-
sented. Unlike slaves, they appear to
have opted out, gotten away with
something, while we earn our bread
by the sweat of our brow. And yet they
certainly sweat, and also shiver. A para-
dox. Often we would like not to work
either—more than a dash of envy sours
our tangled response—but we surely
don't want to sweat quite so much.
There they outdo us. We imagine what
kinds of beggars we would make, as
we have idly imagined what kinds of
politicians or pitchers or violinists we
would make, and shrink from the im-
age. What a relief, then, how glad we
are of our lives. The next instant brings
a faint needling: But are we living
right? Do our lives make sense? Any
more than theirs? What do their lives
say about our own? The worst suspi-
cion, the one we must not look at too
closely, is that our lives and theirs
amount to more or less the same
thing—sweating, shivering, waiting
to die, only some far more comfort-
ably than others. For then we would
have to wonder, in more than a glanc-
ing way, why as a people we feel no
need to remedy this.

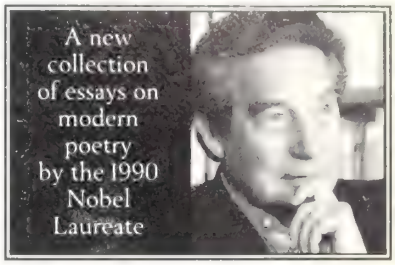
Our finely wrought distinctions,
from A. to Z., shape a peculiar aes-
thetics of giving, fittingly traced on
the urban fresco of blank or battered
faces. The pattern reveals how much
we can give without feeling destitute,
how far we can unclench our fists
without feeling powerless. It becomes
a moral fever chart, as morality always
underlies aesthetics, showing what we
feel ourselves entitled to and how
much we feel the entitlement of oth-
ers falls on us to fulfill. In the end its
import is quite simple: Either we are
our brothers' keepers or we are not.
The government's answer has the
virtue of being cruelly clear: It is no
one's keeper but its own. Our indi-
vidual answers are not cruel, only am-
biguous. Like aesthetics. ■

Octavio Paz

The Other Voice

Essays On Modern Poetry

Translated by Helen Lane



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TENNIS, TRIGONOMETRY, TORNADOES

A Midwestern boyhood

By David Foster Wallace

When I left the boxed township of Illinois farmland where I grew up to attend my dad's alma mater in the lurid, jutting Berkshires of western Massachusetts, I right away developed a jones for mathematics. I'm starting to see why this was so. College math evokes a Midwesterner's sickness for home. I'd grown up inside vectors, lines and lines athwart lines, grids—and, on the scale of horizons, broad curving lines of geographic force, the weird topographical drain-swirl of a whole lot of ice-ironed flatland that sits and spins atop plates. I could plot by eye the area behind and below these broad curves at the seam of land and sky way before I came to know anything as formal as integrals or rates of change. Calculus was, quite literally, child's play.

In late childhood I learned how to play tennis on the blacktop courts of a small public park carved from farmland. This was in my home of Philo, Illinois, a tiny collection of corn silos and war-era Levittown homes whose native residents did little but sell crop insurance and nitrogen fertilizer and herbicide, and collect property taxes from the young academics at nearby Champaign-Urbana's university, whose ranks swelled enough in the flush late 1960s to make an outlying oxymoron like "farm and bedroom community" lucid.

David Foster Wallace is a fiction writer living in Boston.

Between the ages of twelve and fifteen I was a near great junior tennis player. I cut my competitive teeth beating up on lawyers' and dentists' kids at little Champaign and Urbana country club events, and was soon killing whole summers being driven through dawns to tournaments all over Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. At fourteen I was ranked seventeenth in the United States Tennis Association's Western Section ("Western" being the creakily ancient USTA's designation for the Midwest; farther west were the Southwest, Northwest, and Pacific Northwest sections), fourth in the state of Illinois, and around one hundredth in the nation, having flown in 1976, at the regional association's expense, to the U.S. National Junior Hardcourt Championships in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where in the second round I got my rural ass handed to me by a California kid named Scott Davis, who's now a marginal figure on the pro circuit.

My flirtation with tennis excellence had way more to do with a weird proclivity for intuitive math, and with the township where I learned and trained, than with athletic talent. Even by the standards of junior competition, in which everybody's a tight bud of pure potential, I was a pretty untalented tennis player. My hand-eye was okay, but I was neither large nor quick, had a near concave chest and wrists so thin I could bracelet them with a thumb and pinkie, and could hit a tennis ball no harder or truer than most girls my age. What I could do—in the words of my township's juniors' coach, a thin guy who chewed Red Man and spat into a Folgers can—was "Play the Whole Court." This was a tennis cliché that could mean any number of things. In my case, it meant I knew my limitations and the limitations of the court I played on, and adjusted thusly. I was at my best in bad conditions.

Now, conditions in Central Illinois are from a mathematical perspective interesting and from a tennis point of view bad: summer heat and wet-mitten humidity; moths and crap gnats forming an asteroid belt around each tall lamp at night, the whole lit court surface aflutter with spastic little shadows; mosquitoes that spawn in the fields' furrows and in the conferva-chocked ditches that box each field; and, most of all, wind.

The people I know from outside it distill the Midwest into blank flatness, black land and fields of green fronds or five o'clock stubble, gentle swells and declivities that make the topology a sadistic exercise in plotting quadrics, highway vistas so same and dead they drive motorists mad. Those from Indiana, Wisconsin, and northern Illinois think of their Midwest as agronomics and commodities futures and corn-detasseling and bean-walking and seed-company caps, apple-cheeked Nordic types, cider and slaughter and football games with white fog banks of breath exiting helmets. But in the odd central pocket

iat is Champaign-Urbana, Rantoul, nilo, Mahomet-Seymour, Mattoon, id Tolono, Midwestern life is in- rmed and deformed by wind. To the est, between us and the Rockies, iere is basically nothing tall, and eird zephyrs and stirs join breezes id gusts and thermals and down- afts and whatever out over Nebras- a and Kansas, and move east like reams into rivers and jets and mili- ry fronts that gather like avalanch- s and roar in reverse own pioneer ox trails to- ard our own unsheltered sses. Nobody I knew in hilo combed his hair be- use why bother.

The worst was spring, oys' high school tennis eason, when the nets ould stand out stiff as roud flags and an errant all would blow clear to he easternmost fence, nterrupting play on the ext several courts. ummers were manic nd gusty, then often, round August, deadly alm. The wind would ust die, some days, in August, and it was no re- ief at all; the cessation lrove us nuts. We real- zed afresh how much he wind had become art of the soundtrack o life in Philo. The ound of wind had be- come, for me, silence. When it went away, I was left with the squeak of the blood in my head and the aural glitter of all those little eardrum hairs quivering like a drunk in withdrawal.



To your average outsider, Central Illinois looks ideal for sports. The ground, seen from the air, strongly suggests a board game: anally precise squares of dun or khaki cropland all cut and divided by plumb-straight tar roads. From ground level, the arrayed fields of feed corn and soybeans look laned like sprint tracks or Olympic pools, replete with the angles and alleys of serious tennis.

The terrain's strengths are its weaknesses. Because the land seems so even, designers of clubs and parks rarely bother to roll it flat before laying the asphalt for tennis courts. The result is usually a slight list that only a player who spends a lot of time on the courts will notice. Since tennis courts are for sun-and-eye reasons always laid lengthwise north-south, and since the land in Central Illinois rises very gently as one moves east toward Indiana, the court's forehand half, for a rightie facing north, always seems physically uphill from the backhand. The same soil that's so full of humus farmers have to be bought off to keep markets unflooded splits asphalt courts open with the upward pressure of broadleaves whose pioneer-stock seeds are unthwarted by a half-inch cover of sealant and stone. So all but the very best maintained courts in the most affluent Illinois districts are their own little rural landscapes, with tufts and cracks and underground-seepage puddles being part of the lay that one plays.

Tennis-wise, I had three preternatural gifts to compensate for not much physical talent. The first was that I [illegible] much that I stayed fairly well ventilated in all weathers. Oversweating seems an ambivalent blessing, and it didn't exactly do wonders for my social life in high school. But in summer I could play for hours on a Tolono clay court and was flagging but not limp as I drank water and ate salty stuff between matches. I always looked like a drowned man by about game four, but I didn't cramp, vomit, or pass out, unlike the gleaming Peoria kids whose hair never even lost its part right up until their eyes rolled up in their heads and they pitched forward onto the shimmering concrete.

A bigger asset still was that I felt extremely comfortable inside straight lines. This was environmental. Philo is a cockeyed grid: nine north-south streets against six northeast-southwest, dozens and dozens of gorgeous slanted-cruciform corners (the east and west intersection-angles' tangents could be evaluated integrally in terms of their secants!) around a three-intersection central town common. Most of my memories of childhood, whether of furrowed acreage or a harvester's sentry duty along R.R. 104W or the play of sharp shadows against the Legion Hall softball field's dusk, I could now reconstruct on demand with an edge and protractor.

I liked the sharp intercourse of straight lines more than the other kids I grew up with. I think this is because they were natives, whereas I was an infantile transplant from Ithaca, New York, where my dad had Ph.D.'d. So I'd known, even as a baby, horizontally and semiconsciously, something different, the tall hills and serpentine one-ways of upstate New York. I'm pretty sure I kept the amorphous mush of curves and swells as a contrasting backlight somewhere down in the lizardy part of my brain, because the Philo children I fought and played with, kids who knew and had known

Illustration by Caty Bartholomew

nothing stark or
n the township's planar
l nothing crisp.

ally detailed memory is all
helping a neighbor
help his mother till a new vegetable garden out in their backyard one April. The garden's outline was a perfect square, with five quincunx subareas—the center for hallowed zucchini—laid out in an H of popsicle sticks and twine. We little boys removed rocks and hard clods from the lady's path as she worked the Rototiller, a rented, wheelbarrow-shaped, gas-driven thing that roared and snorted and bucked and seemed to propel its mistress rather than vice versa, her feet leaving drunken prints in the earth. In the middle of the tilling my friend's baby brother, maybe like four at the time and wearing some kind of fuzzy red Pooh-wear, came tear-assing out into the backyard crying, holding something really unpleasant-looking in his upturned palm. It turned out to have been a rhomboid patch of mold from some exotic corner of their damp basement. It was a sort of nasal gre
black-speckled, vaguely hirsu
Worse, the patch of mold looked
complete, gnawed on; some nause
stuff was smeared around the lit
kid's mouth. "I ate this," he star
crying as his mother shut down t
tiller and came to him. My friend a
I were grossed out as only kids can
grossed out by smaller kids' repulsi
snafus. But the little kid's mother, w
now that I think about it disappear
under vague medical circumstance
couple years later, went utterly nut

"Help! My son ate this!" she yelle
over and over, holding the speckl
patch aloft, running around ar
around the garden's quadrants whi
my neighbor and I gaped at our first r
al adult hysteria, the sobbing little k
forgotten by all of us.

"Help! My son ate this! Help!" sh
kept yelling, running in tight con
plex little patterns just inside the H
string that marked the garden's quin
cunx; and I remember noting, and be
ing alone in noting, how even i
trauma her flight lines were plumb
her footprints Native American
straight, her turns, inside the ideogra
of string, crisp and martial. She ra
and yelled and turned and yelled an
ran. My friend's dad, who had a pip
sticking out of his face, ha
to go get the hose.

Unless you're just a mutant, a vir
tuoso of raw force, you'll find tha
competitive tennis, like money-pool
requires geometric thinking, the abil
ity to calculate not merely your own
angles but the angles of response to
your angles. Tennis is to artillery and
air strikes what football is to infantry
and attrition. Because the expansion
of response possibilities is quadratic,
you are required to think *n* shots
ahead, where *n* is a hyperbolic func
tion limited by (roughly) your oppo
nent's talent and the number of shots
in the rally so far. I was good at this.
What made me for a while near great
was that I could also admit the dif
ferential complication of wind into
my calculations. Wind did massive
damage to many Central Illinois ju
nior players, particularly in the peri
od between April and July when it
needed lithium badly, tending to gust
without pattern, swirl and backtrack

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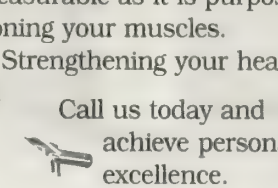


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d die and rise, sometimes blowing
one direction at court level and in
other altogether ten feet overhead.
ne best planned, best hit ball often
st blew out of bounds, was the ba-
unlyrical problem. It drove some
ls near mad with the caprice and
fairness of it all, and on real windy
ys these kids, usually with talent
t the wazoo, would have their first
oplectic racket-throwing tantrum in
out the match's third game and by
e end of the first set would have
sed into a kind of sullen coma, bit-
rly expecting to get screwed over
wind, net, tape, sun. I, who was
ectionately known as Slug because
was so lazy in practice, located my
ggest tennis asset in a weird robot-
detachment from whatever unfair-
sses of wind and weather I couldn't
an for. I couldn't begin to tell you
w many tournament matches I won
tween the ages of twelve and fif-
en against bigger, faster, more co-
dinated, and better coached op-
nents simply by hitting balls un-
naginatively back down the middle
the court in schizophrenic gales,
tting the other kid play with more
erve and panache, waiting for
nough of his ambitious balls aimed
ear the lines to curve or slide via
ind outside the green court and
hite stripe into the raw red territo-
that won me yet another ugly
int. It wasn't pretty or fun to watch,
nd even with the Illinois wind I nev-
could have won whole matches
nis way had the opponent not even-
ually had his small nervous break-
own, buckling under the obvious
njustice of losing to a shallow-chest-
d "pusher" because of the shitty ru-
al courts and rotten wind that
ewarded cautious automatism instead
f verve and panache. I was an un-
opular player, with good reason. But
say that I did not use verve or imag-
nation was untrue. Acceptance is its
wn verve, and it takes imagination
for a player to like wind,
and I liked wind.

I started to win a lot. At twelve, I
egan getting entry to tournaments
eyond Philo and Champaign and
Danville. I was driven by my parents
r by the folks of Gil Antitoi, son of
Québecois-history professor from

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Urbana, to events like the Central Illinois Open in Decatur, a town built and owned by the A. E. Staley processing concern and so awash in the stink of roasting corn that kids would play with bandannas tied over their mouths and noses; like the McDonald's Junior Open in the serious–corn town of Galesburg, way out west by the river, where in 1974 Antitoi so pummeled Hans Block, son of a prosperous hog farmer who was later to become the most hated man in the Midwest as Reagan's secretary of agriculture, that Hans Block, ranked eighth in Illinois in Twelve and Unders, was never seen on a court again; like the Prairie State Open in Pekin, insurance hub and home of Caterpillar tractor; like the Midwest Junior Clay Courts at a chichi private club in Peoria's pale version of Scarsdale.

Over the next four summers I got to see way more of the state than is normal or healthy, albeit most of this seeing was at a blur of travel and crops, looking between nod-outs at sunrises abrupt and terribly candent over the crease between fields and sky, riding in station wagons' backseats through Saturday dawns and Sunday sunsets. I got steadily better; Antitoi, unfairly assisted by an early puberty, got radically better.

By the time we were fourteen, Antitoi and I were the Central Illinois cream of our age bracket, usually seeded one and two at area tournaments, able to beat all but a couple of even the kids from the Chicago suburbs who, together with a contingent from Grosse Pointe, Michigan, usually dominated the Western Sectional rankings. Antitoi and I ranged over the exact same competitive territory; he was my friend and foe and bane. Though I'd started playing two years before he, he was bigger, quicker, and basically better than I by about thirteen, and I was soon losing to him in the finals of just about every tournament I played. So different were our appearances and approaches and general gestalts that we had something of a modest epic rivalry from 1974 through 1977. I had gotten so prescient at using surface, sun, and gusts that I was regarded as a kind of physical savant, a medicine boy of wind and heat, and could play just forever, sending back moon ball baroque with ornate spins. Antitoi uncomplicated from the git-go, h the holy shit out of every round ob ject that came within his ambit, aim ing always for a backcourt corne When he was "on," having a goo day, he varnished the court with m When he wasn't at his best (and th hours we spent—David Hurst fro Bloomington, Kirk McKenzie an Steve Moe of Danville, and I—i meditation and seminar on what var ables of diet, sleep, romance, car ride and even sock color factored into th equation of Antitoi's mood and lev el day to day), he and I had grea matches, real marathon wind-suckers

Of the eleven finals w played in 1974, I won two

Midwest junior tennis was m early initiation into true adult sad ness. I had, by thirteen, developed a sort of Taoist hubris about my ability to control via non-control. I'd found a way not just to accommodate bu to employ the heavy summer winds in matches. No longer just mooning the ball down the center to allow plenty of margin for error and swerve, I was now able to use the currents the way a pitcher uses spit. I could hit curves way out into cross breezes that'd drop the ball just fair; I had a special wind serve that had so much spin the ball turned oval in the air, curved left to right like a smart slider, and then reversed its arc on the bounce. As a junior tennis player, I was for a time a citizen of the concrete physical world in a way the other boys weren't.

My betrayal came at around fifteen, when so many of these single-minded flailing boys became abruptly mannish and tall, with sudden sprays of hair on their thighs and wisps on their lips and ropy arteries on their forearms. My fifteenth summer, kids I'd been beating easily the year before all of a sudden seemed overpowering. In 1977 I lost in the semifinals of two tournaments that I'd beaten Antitoi in the finals of in 1976. The other boys sensed something was up with me, smelled some breakdown in the odd détente I'd had with the elements.

I felt, as I became a later and later bloomer, alienated not just from my own recalcitrant glabrous little body

in a way from the whole ele-
ntal exterior I'd come to see as my
conspirator. I knew, somehow, that
call to height and hair came from
side, from whatever apart from
nsanto and Dow made the corn
w and the hogs rut. My vocation
ped. I felt uncalled. I experienced
same resentment toward what-
r children abstract as Nature that
new Steve Moe felt when a sound-
considered approach shot down
forehand line was blown out by
ust. I began, very quietly, to re-
at my physical place in the great
nema.

It's also true that my whole Mid-
st tennis career matured and then
generated under the aegis of the
ter Principle. In and around my
vnship, where the courts were rural
d budgets low and conditions ex-
me, I was truly near great: I could
ay the Whole Court; I was In My
ement. But the more important
rnaments, the events into which
rural excellence was an easement,
re played in a real different world:
ne courts' surfaces were redone ev-
y spring at the Arlington Tennis
ub, where the National Junior Qual-
er for our Section was held; the
en of these courts' fair territory was
vivid as to distract, its surface so
re of flaw, tilt, crack, or seam as to
scary and disorienting. Playing on
perfect court was for me like tread-
g water out of sight of land: I never
new where I was out there. The 1976
hicago Junior Invitational was held
the Lincolnshire Bath & Tennis
lub, whose huge warren of courts
as enclosed by these troubling green
astic tarps attached to all the fences,
ith little archer-slits in them at eye
vel to afford some parody of specta-
on. These tarps, developed by some
indophobe in the early 1970s, cut
own the worst of the unfair gusts,
at they also seemed to rob the court
pace of new air: Competing at Lin-
olnshire was like playing at the bot-
om of a well. I just wasn't the same,
omehow, without deformities to play
round. I'm thinking now that the
ind and bugs and chuckholes formed
or me a kind of inner boundary, my
wn personal set of lines. Once I hit
certain level of tournament facilities,
was disabled because I was unable
to accommodate the absence of di-
abilities to accommodate. Puberty
angst aside, my Midwest tennis career
plateaued the moment I
saw my first windscreen

Still strangely eager to speak of the weather, let me say that my township, in fact all of east-central Illinois, is a proud part of what meteorologists call Tornado Alley. I personally have seen two or three on the ground and five aloft, trying to assemble. The grotesque frequency of tornadoes around my township is, I'm told, a function of the same variables that cause our civilian winds: We are a coordinate where fronts and air masses converge. Most days between late March and June there are Tornado Watches somewhere in our TV stations' viewing area. Watches mean conditions are right and so on and so forth—big deal. It's only the rarer Tornado Warnings, which require a confirmed sighting by somebody with reliable sobriety, that make the civil defense sirens go. The siren on top of the Philo Elementary School was a different pitch and cycle from the one off in the south part of Urbana, and the two used to weave in and out of each other in a god-awful threnody. When the sirens blew, the native families went to their canning cellars or fallout shelters (no kidding); the academic families in their bright prefab houses with new lawns and foundations of flat slab went with whatever good-luck tokens they could lay hands on to the very most central point on the ground floor after opening every single window to thwart implosion from precipitous pressure drops. For my family, the very most central point was a hallway between my dad's study and a linen closet, with a reproduction of a Flemish Annunciation scene on one wall and a bronze Aztec sunburst hanging with guillotinic mass on the other; I always tried to maneuver my sister under the sunburst.

If there was an actual Warning when you were outside away from home, say at a tennis tournament in some godforsaken public park at some city fringe zoned for sprawl, you were supposed to lie prone in the deepest depression you could locate. Since the only real depressions around most tournament sites were the irrigation

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V	A	C	E	N	T	A	U	R	M	O	I	L	S	
U	N	I	C	O	R	N	M	A	Y	P	O	L	E	

NOTES FOR "CROSSES"

ACROSS: 1. CH-I-PP-EWA (rev.); 6. ARNICA, anagram; 11. ALONE, hidden; 13. OF-FAN-DON; 15. NI-L; 16. Y-ROD reversed; 17. CLUE, odd letters; 18. PLAUSIBLY, anagram; 19. O(RIB)-I; 20. ET A(1); 21. PROM(iscuity); 23. P(I)AZZA; 24. ESSEN(c)E; 25. E(conomic)-GEST; 26. U(...R)SA); 27. PATE(nt); 32. ERGO, two meanings; 34. (ho)TROD; 35. JOU(R...)NEYMEN, anagram; 38. SO-B, "bawl"; 39. SCRA(tch) reversed; 40. M(O)ILS; 41. UNICORN, anagram; 42. MAY-POLE. DOWN: 1. CO-NCRETE (anagram); 2. HA(IL)S; 3. ILL-USAGES, anagram; 4. PO(reversal)-ME; 5. (b)EER; 7. RADIO ASTRONOMY, anagram; 8. IDOLIZE, "idle eyes"; 9. CORYBANT(e), anagram; 10. ANYWISE, anagram; 12. NEPHROTIC, anagram; 14. FA(U...)X-PAS (reversal); 22. MURPHY, anagram; 26. UPB(anagram)-EAT(anagram); 27. POTS-TIP reversed; 28. A-FRO; 29. ENDORSE, hidden; 30. DE(JAVa)U, anagram of DUE; 31. OSMIUM, anagram of MI(as)MOUS; 33. GUCCI, "G U 2 Cs I"; 36. O-RAN; 37. NO(i)NO reversed.

SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 107). ALMA DENNY: BUSTIN' OUT ALL RIGHT. What is so rare as a day in Joon / Wid absolutely nuttin' doon? / Nobody bein' graduated, / bon voyaged or welcome-gated? / Nobody bein' birthday-feted, testimonialized, or mated? / Joon's okay but we'd like it better / Widdout such a lot of gettin' togedder.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 108, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by December 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the January 1992 issue. Winners of Double Acrostic No. 106 are Ralph Gerber, Miami, Florida; Linda Fink, Grand Ronde, Oregon; and Aileen Creighton, Corpus Christi, Texas.

and runoff ditches that bordered c
tivated fields—ditches icky with co
ferva and mosquito spray and alwa
heaving with what looked like co
ventions of copperheads and just h
sically places you don't want to
prone in under any circumstances—
practice at Warned tournaments y
zipped your rackets into their cove
and ran to find your loved ones
even your liked ones and just mill
around trying to look like you were
terrified.

Tornadoes were a real part of m
Midwest childhood, because as a litt
kid I was obsessed with dread ov
them. My earliest nightmares we
about shrieking sirens and dead whi
skies, a slender monster on the lo
horizon jutting less phallic than sau
an from the lowering sky, whippi
back and forth with such frenzy that
almost doubled on itself, trying to e
its own tail, throwing off chaff and du
and chairs. It never came any clos
than the horizon; it didn't have to.

I stayed obsessed as I aged, and
know why: Tornadoes, for me, were
transfiguration. Like all serious wind
they were the *z*-coordinate for our lit
tle stretch of plain, a move up from th
Euclidian monotone of furrow, roa
axis, and grid. We studied tornadoes i
junior high: A Canadian high straight
lines it southeast from the Dakotas;
moist warm mass drawls on up nort
from Arkansas. The result was not
Greek *x* or even a Cartesian axis bu
an alchemical circling of the square
Tornadoes were, in our part of Centra
Illinois, the dimensionless point a
which parallel lines met and whirle
and blew up. They made no sense
Houses blew not out but in. Brothel
were spared while orphanages nex
door bought it. Dead cattle were found
three miles from their silag
without a scratch on them

The only time I ever got caught in
what might have been one was in June
1978 on a tennis court at Hessel Park
in Champaign, where I was drilling
one afternoon with Gil Antitoi
Though a contemptible and despised
tournament opponent, I was a covet-
ed practice partner because I could
transfer balls to wherever you wanted
them with the tireless consistency o
a machine. This particular day it was

pposed to rain around suppertime, id a couple of times we thought we'd ard the tattered edges of sirens out est toward Monticello, but Antitoi id I drilled religiously every afternoon that week on the slow clayish ar-Tru of Hessel, trying to prepare for beastly clay invitational in Chicago. 'e were doing butterflies, a real unpleasant drill where his cross-courts ternated with my down-the-lines. utterflies are primarily a conditiong drill: Both players have to get from ne side of the court to the other between each stroke, and once the initial pain and wind-sucking is over, ssuming you're a kid who's in absurd nape because you spend countless indless hours jumping rope or running laps backward or doing straight rints back and forth along the perct furrows of bean fields each morng, once the first pain and fatigue of utterflies are got through, if both uys are good enough so that there re few unforced errors to break up ne rally, a kind of fugue-state opens p inside you and your concentration elescopes toward a still point and you se awareness of your limbs and the ft shush of your shoe's slide and hatever's outside the lines of the ourt, and pretty much all you know hen is the bright ball and the octanled butterfly outline of its path across he court, and at Hessel Park the court vas such a deep piney color that the lights of the fluorescent balls stayed n one's visual screen for a few extra econds, leaving trails.

We had one just endless rally and 'd left the planet in a silent swoop when the court and ball and butterfly rail all seemed to surge brightly and glow as the daylight just plain went ut in the sky overhead. Neither of us nad noticed that there'd been no wind blowing the familiar grit into our eyes for several minutes—a bad sign. There was no siren. Later they said the civil defense alert network had been out of order. The temperature dropped so fast you could feel your hairs rise. There was no thunder; no air stirred. I could not tell you why we kept hitting. Neither of us said anything. There was no siren. It was high noon; there was nobody else on the courts. The riding mower at the softball field was still going back and forth. There were no depressions except a saprogenic ditch along the field of new corn just west. What could we have done? I think we thought it would rain at worst and that we'd play till it rained and then go sit in Antitoi's parents' station wagon. We were both in the fugue-state that exhaustion through repetition brings on, a fugue-state I've decided that my whole time on tennis was spent chasing, a fugue-state I associate too with plowing and seeding and detasseling and spreading herbicides back and forth in sentry duty along perfect lines, up and back, or military marching on flat blacktop, hypnotic, a mental state at once flat and lush, numbing and yet exquisitely felt. We were young, we didn't know when to stop. I was mad at my body and wanted to hurt it, wear it down. Then the whole knee-high field to the west along Kirby Avenue all of a sudden flattened out in a wave coming toward us as if the field were getting steamrolled. Antitoi went wide west for a forehand cross and I saw the corn get laid down in waves and the sycamores lining the ditch point our way. There was no funnel. Either it had just materialized and come down or it wasn't a real one. The big heavy swings on the industrial swing sets took off, wrapping themselves in their chains around and around the top crossbar; the park's grass laid down the same way the field had. It all happened very fast: field, trees, swings, grass, then the feel like the lift of the world's biggest mitt, the nets suddenly and sexually up and out straight as flags, and I seem to remember whacking a ball out of my hand at Antitoi to watch its radical west-east curve, and for some reason trying to run after this ball I'd just hit, but I couldn't have tried to run after a ball I had hit, but I remember the heavy gentle lift at my thighs and the ball curving back closer and my passing the ball and beating the ball in flight over the horizontal net, my feet not once touching the ground over fifty-odd feet, and then there was chaff and crud in the air all over and both Antitoi and I were blown pinwheeling for I swear it must have been fifty feet to the fence one court over, the easternmost fence, we hit the fence so hard we knocked

Continued on page 75



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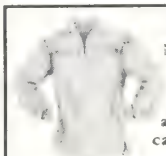
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Continued from page 75

it halfway down, and it stuck at 45
Antitoi detached a retina and had t
wear those funky Jabbar retina-go
gles for the rest of the summer, and th
fence had two body-shaped indenta
tions like in cartoons where the guy
face leaves an imprint in the skille
that hit him, two catcher's masks o
fence, we both got deep quadrangula
lines impressed on our faces, torso
legs' fronts, from the fence, my siste
said we looked like waffles, but neithe
of us got badly hurt, and no home
got whacked—either the thing jus
ascended again for no reason right af
ter, they do that, they obey no rule
follow no line, hop up and down a
something that might as well be will
or else it wasn't a real one. Antitoi'
tennis continued to improve after that
but mine didn't. ∎

December Index Sources

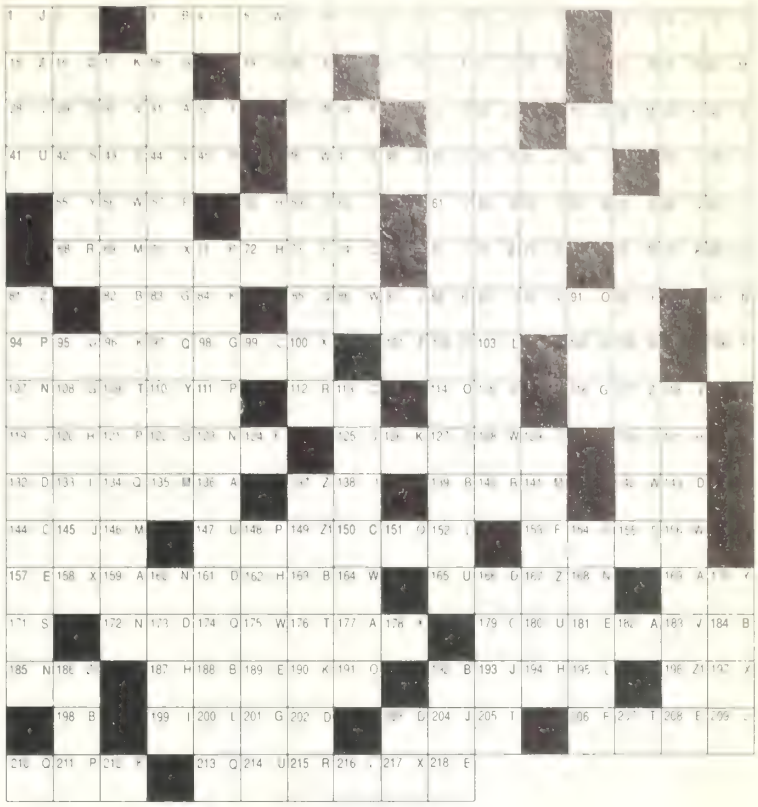
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 108

by Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: The first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 74.



CLUES WORDS

A. Chief commodity; raw material; principal — 177 182 169 159 136 31

B. 1945 Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra film (2 wds.) — 139 62 3 188 34 184 163 198 82 24 50 192 76

C. One who affects virtual omniscience (hyph.) — 150 74 113 144 154 99 127 43 179

D. Very much, greatly (4 wds.) — 16 161 143 173 115 21 203 132 7 105 19 166 202

E. Casting out; denying acceptance — 23 77 157 57 40 218 189 181 208

F. "With a wotful ballad/Made to his mistress' ___" (*As You Like It*) — 206 92 22 101 124 73 153

G. Black, lustrous form of carbon used in pencils — 18 201 83 122 98 65 116 108

H. Place of mental withdrawal from reality (2 wds.) — 72 194 58 88 45 49 131 187 162 120

I. Cap. of ancient Assyria — 2 89 138 216 199 133 4

J. Consent or sanction — 193 119 125 87 1 51 145 204

K. Sends forth, sets in operation; starts a new enterprise — 126 79 96 17 190 212 39 84

L. Used up gradually (resources, strength) — 152 52 28 209 200 103 195 60

M. Struck with something flat — 146 64 69 38 27 135 141

N. Punished in order to correct; subdued — 172 78 160 168 8 123 185 107 93

O. Hampers, hinders — 191 29 114 35 91 151 48

P. Largest of the Dodecanese Islands — 94 71 121 111 148 211

Q. Rail, make a strong verbal attack — 210 54 134 213 174 97 85

R. Grows firm, strong, stubborn, etc. — 25 112 6 68 215 14 140 106

S. Tantalized — 155 47 42 11 12 171

T. Obeyed — 109 53 207 32 176 205

U. Took in as a member; joined — 180 214 165 41 59 104 95 136 61 147

V. Pelts of the European marten — 66 12 93 44 183 32

W. "The Red Baron" — 5 142 128 156 33 56 86 46 164 175

X. 1933 film in which Hedy Lamarr appeared nude — 172 [illegible] 167 178 [illegible] 202

Y. Characterized by intense feeling; impassioned — [illegible] 110 [illegible] 125 9 20 170 55

Z. Inform, free from ignorance or superstition — 129 15 81 137 63 117 75 36

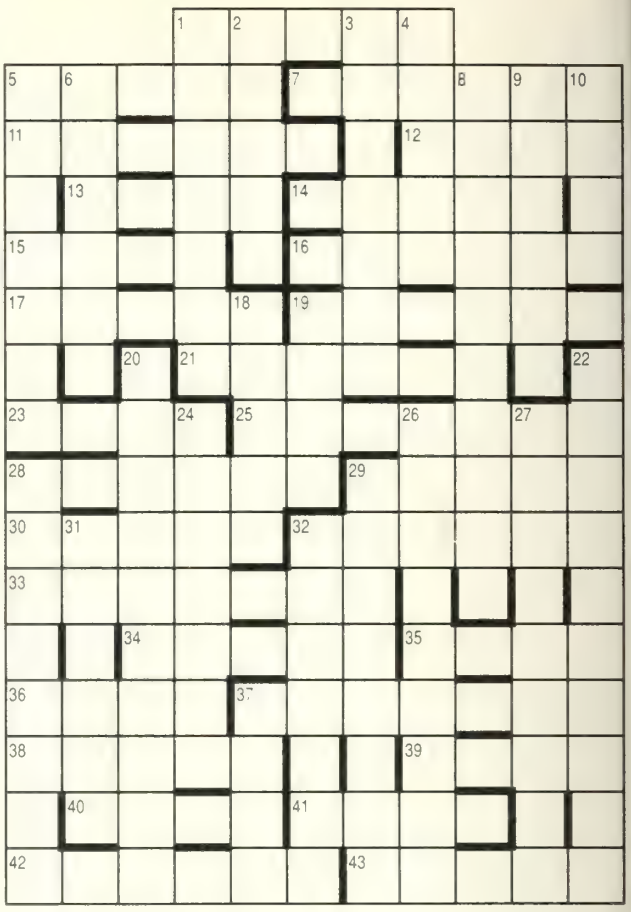
Z1. Son and heir of Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus — 80 26 149 196 102 186 167

Migratory Pattern

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby Jr.

Fifteen of the answers to the Down clues require a seasonal adjustment before they can be entered in the diagram, bearing 1 Across in mind.

Clue answers include uncommon words at 32A and 31D, and four proper names. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 74.



Across

5. Bird from Southern Ireland (5)
7. To repeat something is what free choice is about (6)
11. Typical of a religious group, unusual in the Catholic (6)
12. Inverse mathematical group including zero and some digits (4)
13. Very eager to lose head and love disco (4, *hyph.*)
14. Gypsy's beginning peel with burlesque move (5)
15. Hinted two cut short backing (4)
16. Superficial artwork? AT&T is taken in as well (6)
17. Pots for stew, also possibly holding liquid (5)
19. Strong wines fermented with bit of yeast (6)
21. Boat with pull on river (6)
23. Half of women's sleepwear is some menswear (4)
25. Left group of lawyers inside, group of doctors state (7)
28. Career damaged by the French (6)
29. I'm as disturbed about vice as an English bird (5)
30. Cut tail off seal hide (5)
32. Plant bracts, light-colored, and each turned over (6)
33. Puts off time to hog the spotlight (7)
34. Electrical unit is hot—no time for bookkeeping record (5)
35. Sued, after changing sides, for fees (4)
36. Fancy part of hideaway (4)
37. Congregate for part of the Mass (7)
38. Famous comedian with pronounced veneer (5)
39. Monstrous, being part of progress (4)
40. Betrayed, I dropped out of firm (4)
41. Press is beginning to ignore Reagan (4)
42. Body with brilliance and range of vision recessed (6)
43. No white in *Heart of Darkness* is recognized (5)

Down

1. Buck-and-wing's beginning (7)
2. Herb's Number One, after comeback planned first (5)
3. Preview disturbing retrial (7)
4. Object about article's small tax (5)
5. Kid's vehicle engineered to score (7)
6. Passage for food, 45 inches in length, going back into belly (6)
8. Deny converting Covenanter (10)
9. Who reformed, went in front, and roared (6)
10. European city with old-style look (4)
18. Rock star's first sound (5)
19. Take a ship, announcing transfer of ownership (4)
20. Sits precariously holding right onto horses (10)
22. Arrest seen as possibility for New Yorkers, e.g. (10)
24. Furtiveness that's disruptive to the last (7)
26. Made a bundle taking in dope and expanded (9)
27. Warm voice strained with some frequency (9)
28. Flower bush (*sic*) I potted (8)
29. Cheeky? Clue is nonsense (8)
31. Footless creatures . . . Answer: foolish dopes (6)
32. Entering name in professional major league (7)
37. Outspoken sow. Give up? (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Migratory Pattern," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions drawn at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the February 1992 issue. Winners of the October puzzle, "Hextracts," are Sandra Ferrer, Brooklyn, New York; Daniel Thomas, Stoughton, Wisconsin; and Dorothy Magette, Princeton, New Jersey.